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The Book
of
Courage

W. J. Dawson

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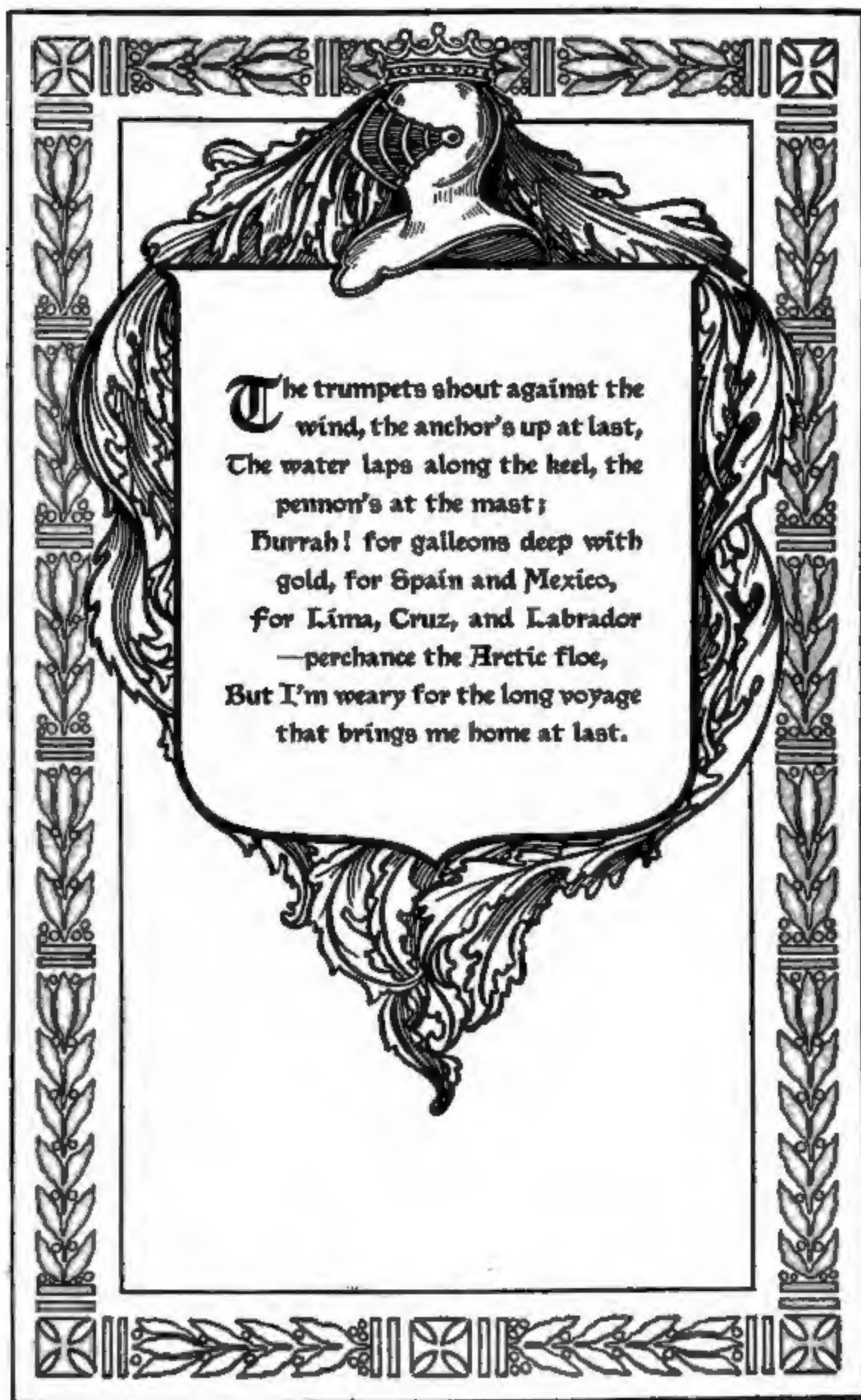
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is highest in God's
when the books are

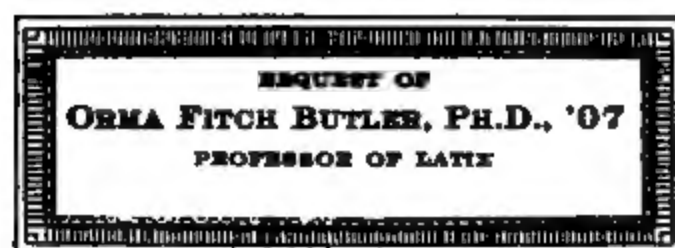
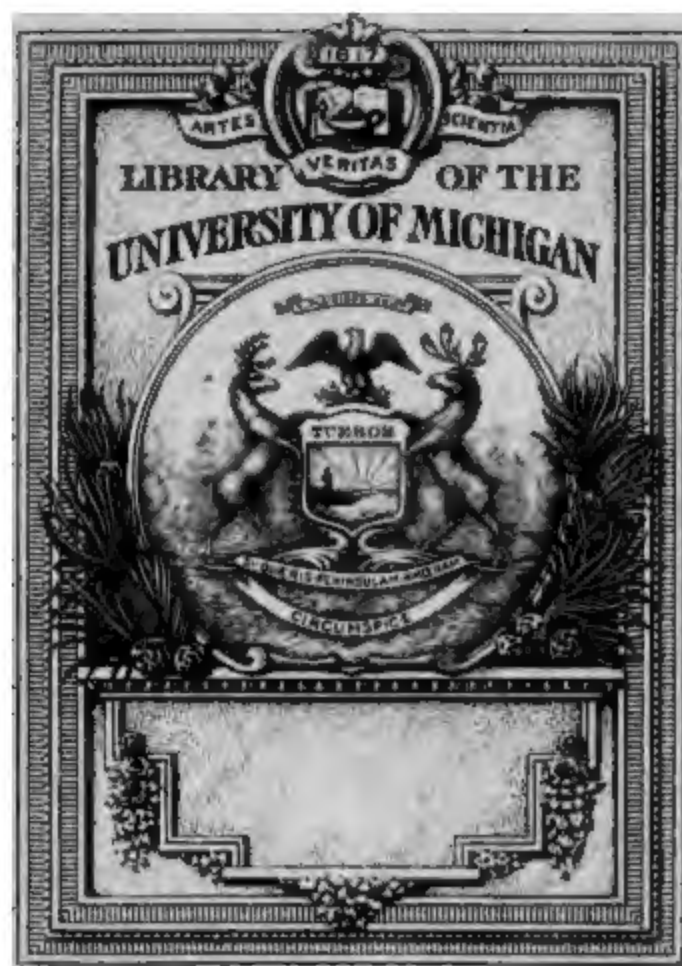
his strength in
whom the world

ed to struggle and
to drink the bitter cup?
The gold-crowned or the thorn-
crowned? Caligula or Christ?

Bd
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C8
D2



The trumpets shout against the
wind, the anchor's up at last,
The water laps along the keel, the
pennon's at the mast ;
Hurrah ! for galleons deep with
gold, for Spain and Mexico,
for Lima, Cruz, and Labrador
—perchance the Arctic floe,
But I'm weary for the long voyage
that brings me home at last.



The Book of Courage

/

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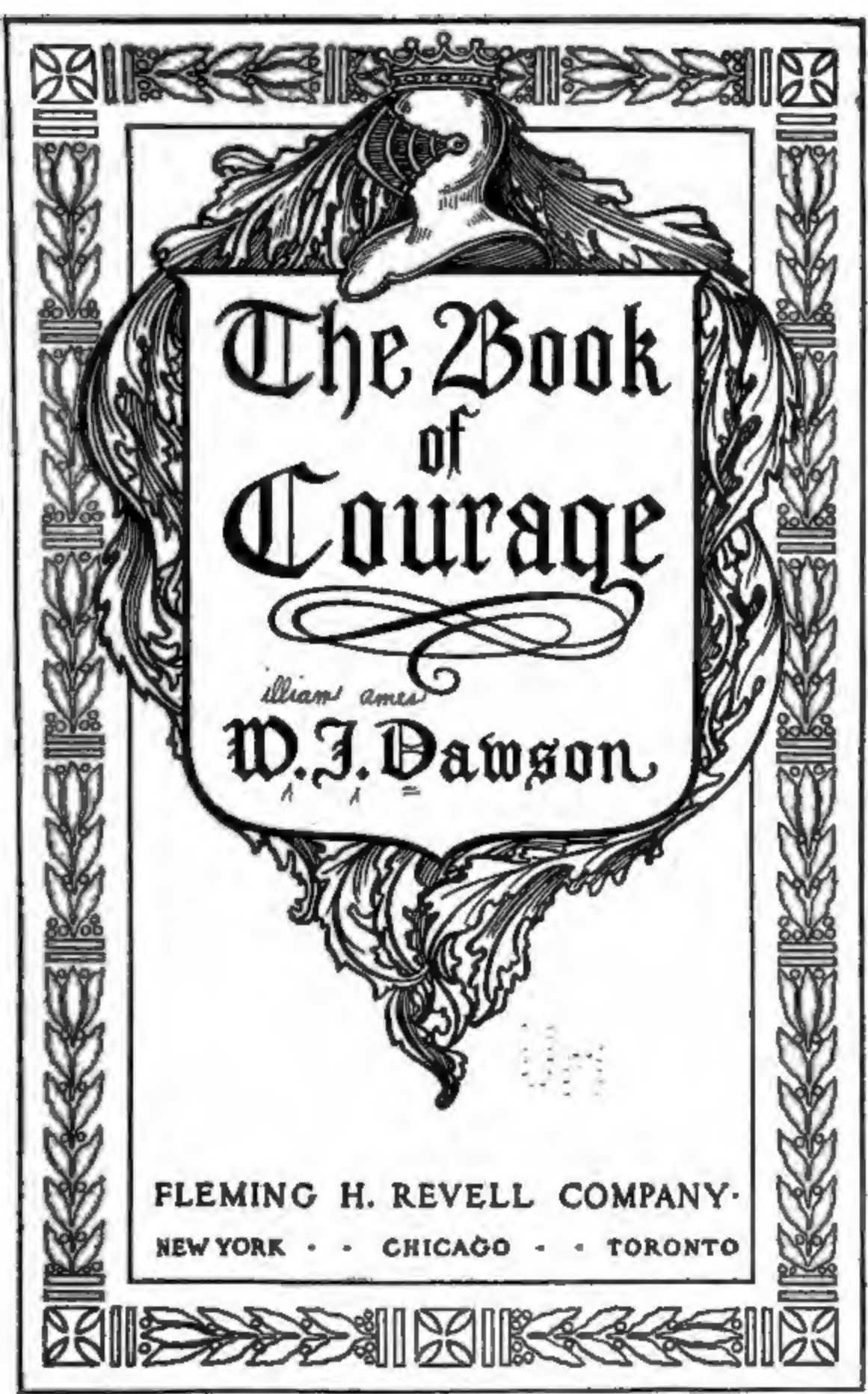
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The Book of Courage

William Ames
W. J. Dawson

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CONTENTS

I.	The Need of Courage	11
II.	The Success of Failure	27
III.	The Failure of Friendship . .	45
IV.	On Facing Difficulties	63
V.	On Losing Money	81
VI.	On Sudden Tragedy	101
VII.	On Ill-Health	121
VIII.	On Bereavement	141
IX.	On Leaving Familiar Things . .	161
X.	On Old Age	185
XI.	The Courage of an Obscure Life .	207
XII.	The Meaning of Life	229



POEMS

	PAGE
The Final Friend	10
The True Triumph	26
The Builders	44
Aspiration	62
The Adventure	80
The Contrast	100
The Tenant	120
The Orchestra	140
The Exile	160
The Upper Road	184
City and Country	206
O Soul, my Star	228

I.

The Need of Courage

THE FINAL FRIEND.

I asked at Dawn the eager wind
From ice-clad mountains drawn;
I faced it with a battling mind,
And never felt its edge unkind,
So joyous was the Dawn.

I asked at Noon the burning sun,
And claimed it as a boon;
No day for me too soon begun,
No race I was not glad to run,
So strong was I at noon.

I asked at Eve a single Friend
Who taught me not to grieve
For errors which I could not mend,
And prizes lost at life's gray end,
So tired was I at eve.

And as he spoke, within my heart
New life began to stir.
How sweet when fails Ambition's 'chart,
To find, as Pride and Hope depart,
Courage, the Comforter.

I.

THE NEED OF COURAGE

SHAKESPEARE, supreme spectator and interpreter of the drama of human existence, has given us a poignant picture of the seven stages of man's life from the cradle to the grave; and again, on the lips of Wolsey has summed up the same drama in three acts: hope, honor and decay.

"This is the state of man; to-day he puts forth
The tender leaves of hope; to-morrow blossoms
And bears his blushing honors thick upon him;
The third day comes a frost, a nipping frost;
And—when he thinks, good easy man, full surely
His greatness is a-ripening—nips his root,
And then he falls."

An older poet, writing twenty-two hundred years earlier, has touched the same theme with even finer insight. (Youth, for the Hebrew poet, is the period of great ambitions when men soar as on the wings of eagles: mid-life is the time of entire efficiency, when men run and are not weary; age is still triumphant if it can contrive to walk and not faint.

THE BOOK OF COURAGE

As life goes on most of us come to see that it is a much harder, and therefore a much greater thing, to walk and not faint, than to soar on winged hopes, or run on tireless feet. In the first flush of ambition we recognize no obstacles, and we can therefore mount as on the wings of eagles. In mid-manhood, we recognize obstacles indeed, but rejoice in their conquest, for our tasks are equalled by our capabilities, and we run and are not weary. The really hard part of life is reached when we have to learn how to walk and not faint; and that part of our journey confronts us very often before age has overtaken us.

Take such a life as Sir Walter Scott's, in which each of these conditions is illustrated. He has his winged period, when he soars into the heavens of poetry, and no prize seems beyond his grasp. He is lord of the eagle's wing, only retiring from those bright heights of song when he finds himself outsoared by one stronger than himself. He then enters on his second period, when he builds up fame and fortune by the publication of his novels. They are written

THE NEED OF COURAGE

with a supreme ease unparalleled in literature. One of them, by many esteemed the greatest, is produced in six weeks. He works while others sleep, drawing upon resources which appear inexhaustible. Then comes the hour of tragic downfall, when he finds himself confronted by a debt of £117,000. He can no longer run without weariness, but he sets himself steadfastly to the task of learning how to walk and not faint. He refuses defeat; defies "ill-luck, that direful chemist," to dissolve the elements of his genius; toils on valiantly to the end, and dies working. Is not this old, heroic, toil-worn Scott, from whom the world has taken everything but courage, a far greater man than the earlier Scott, to whom the world gave everything? Was it not a much greater thing to walk and not faint under so great a load of disaster, than to soar and run without weariness in the days of unstinted prosperity?

It is strange how we assume that the great temptations of life are peculiar to youth. Youth, of course, has its temptations; and so, for that matter, has childhood; but he is a poor

THE BOOK OF COURAGE

observer of life who has not discerned that the greatest temptations of life come in our mature years. Along the shores of life the sea is shallow, and though there is peril in the lee-shore, yet when the storm comes there are many available harbors of refuge. But when the storm comes in the Mid-Atlantic of life no harbor is available. Everything then depends on the stanchness of the ship, the courage of the captain, the excellence of the seamanship. The peril of foundering in mid-ocean is certainly not less than the peril of driving on a rock-bound coast. It is part of the constant tragedy of life that men who have survived the temptations of youth go down under the more subtle temptations of maturity. There are prodigal fathers as well as prodigal sons.

Equally strange is it how we all disregard the threatenings of vicissitude. Although we see every day men around us deprived of employment, driven into poverty, overwhelmed by sickness, reduced by one cause or another to the ranks from positions of authority, yet we never

T H E N E E D O F C O U R A G E

for an instant imagine that such things can happen to us. A friend loses his health, his money, or his children, and while we commiserate with him, and for some days find our thoughts sobered by the recollection of his suffering, the last thought that visits us is, "This might have happened to me." Epidemics rage around us, but it is part of our blind and cheerful egoism to regard ourselves as immune. Men and women die, even those who are dear to us, but we go on our way, laying our plans for life, as though we alone were incapable of death. All these things are like distant thunderstorms, which are to us but beautiful terrors as long as they are distant; and who imagines them as pouring devastating flame upon himself?

Yet we are thoroughly aware that there is no immunity for us, or any other creature. Life makes no exceptions. Those we esteem most fortunate have their misfortunes, only we do not know them. The gross and palpable misfortunes are by no means the worst; they only seem the greater because they are visible. Life has a strange art of equalling human destinies

in the long run, of reducing them to a common average. The old classic saying, "Count no man fortunate till he is dead," springs from the sad perception that no man wholly escapes vicissitude, though for a long time he may appear to do so. Were we in doubt on such a matter, we have only to read biography to discern its truth; for what biography do we possess that does not record both sweet and bitter, both triumph and defeat?

That we do thus regard ourselves as immune from the trials common to all men, is not to our discredit; for without this illusion life could not go on at all. Who would dare commence a business if he knew how near he would come to ruin in more than one hour of crisis; or marry, if he could forecast the agonizing death of children; or even breathe the daily air if he could vividly picture to himself the germs of poison that infect it? Who would go to sea or take a long railroad journey if he truly realized on how many frail contrivances his security depended, on how many chances, on how many unseen fellow creatures, in any one of whom de-

T H E N E E D O F C O U R A G E

fect of duty might be the occasion of disaster? Yet men do all these things because they are obsessed with the illusion of immunity. It is the same upon the battlefield, which is the most conspicuous place of peril known to man. The soldier learns to say, or at least to think, "Though a thousand fall on my right hand, and a thousand on my left, yet it shall not come nigh me." He encourages this belief in his own immunity; and hence men, not more robustly fashioned than ourselves, play cards with shells whistling over their heads, eat their meals with good appetite undisturbed by bullets, and perform a hundred other surprising actions, which to the onlooker seem impossible.

The fact remains, however, that simply because this sense of immunity is an illusion, it cannot last forever. We are permitted to make use of it for the reason already given, that life could not be carried on without it. Both Nature and society trick us into doing many things that serve the collective progress by allowing us to see only half-truths, or by making promises which they construe one way and we an-

other. No one is to blame for the deception; indeed we are not only willing to be deceived, but are deceived for our own good, as is the child, who is bribed by kindergarten methods which look like play, into the hard pursuit of knowledge. The supreme test of life comes when at last the illusion of immunity fails us, and that test cannot be evaded.

Let us take the quite common case of the man who, up to a certain point of life, has known nothing but good fortune. He has had health, education, affection, friendship; he has married happily, and his home has been gladdened by promising and healthy children; he has attempted many things and succeeded in all; he has gone upon his prosperous way without defeat, rebuff, or serious interruption. In such a man, however humble he may be, there grows up a sense that he is a favorite of fortune. He cannot imagine life otherwise for him than what it has always been. Then, at some point which the sad wisdom of later years can fix on as definite, the first premonition of change is felt. It is at first almost imperceptible, like the quiet

T H E N E E D O F C O U R A G E

gathering of gray clouds in a summer sky. In his business transactions the magic touch has left him. He, who has never once failed in that acute sagacity which is the sixth sense of business, makes blunders which his most obscure clerk can perceive. Then, perhaps, when he most needs steadiness of nerve, his health fails him; his children fall sick; his home is invaded by death. What will he do in such an hour? The illusion of immunity has now become the bitterest of ironies. Has he anything that can take its place?

It is a common practice under such circumstances to offer consolation, and to assume that this is the best that can be done. But consolation, in its ordinary forms, is the one thing we do not desire, and is also the one thing most hurtful to us. Who is the better for being told when he has lost his money, that very likely he will be the better without it, since money is not essential to happiness? He knows perfectly well that his consoler is merely uttering a copy-book maxim, which he has never tested in his own experience. Who is the more resigned in

T H E B O O K O F C O U R A G E

the hour of loss for being told that death is common to the race? He had never had any doubt on that point, and it is hard to see how we can meet death the better for being reminded of its cruel catholicity. Besides which, it is not resignation we want, but recuperation. To be resigned under conditions of tragedy is merely to quit fighting, and what is needed most is the power to fight again, and fight better. The commonplace consoler, if we listened to him, would deprive us of this power. He would administer an anodyne to the will that needs a stimulant. He would leave us amid the wreck of our happiness instead of teaching us to rebuild it. He would quietly conduct us from the battlefield to some conventual cell, where our memories would be our torture; whereas any one truly acquainted with the human heart could tell him that the best medicine for us is the shrill call of trumpets, the shouting ranks, and the new battle that coins victory from defeat.

There is, however, a kind of consolation which does not depress, but invigorates the will, be-

cause it has the rare skill to restore our confidence. In the *Autobiography of Mark Rutherford* there is a scene which precisely illustrates this point. The unhappy hero has failed—through forgetfulness in some small detail of business,—and is overwhelmed by the conviction of his own utter uselessness. The meanest clerk could have done better, he tells himself. In an agony of shame he buries his head in the lap of Theresa, taking refuge in her almost masculine firmness and calmness from the hysteria of his own despair. “She did not repel me,” he relates, “but she gently passed her fingers through my hair. Oh, the transport of that touch! It was as if water had been poured on a burnt hand, or some miraculous Messiah had soothed the delirium of a fever-stricken sufferer, and replaced his visions of torment with dreams of Paradise. She gently lifted me up, and as I rose I saw her eyes, too, were wet. ‘My poor friend,’ she said, ‘you are altogether mistaken about yourself. The meanest clerk in the city could not take your place here.’” That was all, but how much it was! It was the re-

T H E B O O K O F C O U R A G E

assurance of worth created in one who had thought himself worthless. "I should like to add one more beatitude to those of the gospels," he writes, "and say, 'Blessed are they who heal of self-despisings.' Of all services which can be done to man, I know of none more precious."

This was true consolation, because it made for recuperation, it stimulated a broken nature to new courage. No man suffers in vain, if the events of life slowly conduct him to the discovery in himself of the real and priceless treasure of courage. It may even appear, in the long run, that the discovery was worth all the price of anguish paid for it, since from it he draws the weapons for a more enduring victory. For the supreme need of life is courage. Courage, in some form, we must have, if we are not to fall trampled beneath the feet of circumstance. It is the coward alone for whom defeat is final. For the courageous man, however defeated, there is always a future.

This is the lesson of all great lives. If we take at random a hundred famous biographies,

T H E N E E D O F C O U R A G E

dissimilar as they may be in all their outward aspects, we shall find that they are all alike as documents of human courage. Augustine has the courage to forget a stained past, and to build his life anew; Galileo, the courage to persist in the declaration of scientific truths which the world counts heresy and blasphemy; Dr. Johnson, the courage to pursue his aims in spite of poverty, ridicule, and contempt; Wordsworth, the courage to wait through forty years of popular neglect for the recognition which he knows must come; Wolfe, the courage to anticipate heroic deeds when most men consider him a fool; Disraeli, the courage to declare himself fitted for the highest offices of state when to a scornful House of Commons he appears nothing better than an impecunious adventurer. The list is interminable. It ranges from Cæsar to Garibaldi. It includes the undying enthusiasm of Paul, the unwearied steadfastness of William the Silent, the sublime patience of Abraham Lincoln. Withdraw the element of courage from such lives, and they dissolve into inconspicuous dust. Sorrow, struggle, defeat,

unmerited disasters marked all these lives, and it would seem upon a tragic scale not known in ordinary lives. But through all, the flame of an undying courage burned, and this was their supreme virtue, out of which greatness came.

Here, then, is the most practical issue of life to which we can address ourselves. Let the dream of immunity go, for it is both foolish and false. Let us rather face the facts of life, counting it as certain that no life can be wholly free from vicissitudes. When the gray clouds gather in the sky, when the sudden thunderbolt brings devastation, when the foundations of our house of joy move and crack before the encroaching flood, what are we to do?

In that hour Faith may fail us and Hope depart; but there always remains Courage—the heroic temper which defies the antagonism of events, and in the end may overcome it.

II.

The Success of Failure

THE TRUE TRIUMPH

**He dwelt within the wilderness
Disdaining Mammon's lure:
He walked among the thorns of pain,
And yet his step was sure.**

**He saw the vine-deck't homes of men,
And gazed with quiet eyes;
He turned away: "Not here," he said,
"Is found my Paradise."**

**He saw the gilded chariots pass,
The conqueror's array:
They held to him a laurel crown,
And still he turned away.**

**Back to the wilderness he went
Without a thought of loss:
He hewed out of the wood two beams
And made himself a Cross.**

**"If I would save them I must die!
(This was the thing he said)
Perchance the hearts that hate me now
Will learn to love me dead."**

**He died upon the Cross he made,
Without a lip to bless:
He rose into a million hearts,
And this was his success.**

II.

THE SUCCESS OF FAILURE

THE most humiliating, if not the most tragic, hours of life are those in which we believe ourselves to be failures. Other men succeed, but we do not. Other men have the skill to grasp the "skirts of happy chance," but chance eludes us. Other men appear to move by stages as certain as natural law along a predestined road of conquest; we are left behind. So far as we can judge, these men are not superior to ourselves in native faculty; and, in many instances, they are so palpably our inferiors that it is not vanity to state the fact. We know very well that we ought to be able to do all that they can do; but some inscrutable impediment hinders us. They appear born to succeed, and we to fail.

This doleful experience often begins very early. It begins in childhood. An impatient or ill-tempered nurse tells a sensitive child that he is stupid, and reiterates the word so often, that

at last he comes to believe it. A martinet father, who regards a child as a piece of mechanism solely under his own control, resents the appearance of idiosyncrasy in his son, tries to extirpate it, and when he finds he cannot, indulges himself in doleful prophecies of social and moral disaster. A coarse-minded schoolmaster makes a butt of the boy who does not learn as fast as his fellows, taunts him with imbecility, and finally reduces him to a condition so pitiable that the taunt seems justified. Very few writers who have written of childhood have had anything adequate to say about its secret miseries. Thackeray has come nearest to revealing the dark side of childhood, when he wrote, "Who feels injustice; who shrinks before a slight; who has a sense of wrong so acute, and so glowing a sense of gratitude, as a generous boy?" It is notable that Thackeray is writing of a boy who was constantly humiliated by the accusation of stupidity.

The same kind of thing happens through the years that follow childhood. Success in life, as it is interpreted by commonplace people, means

THE SUCCESS OF FAILURE

only one thing,—the power of earning money. Not to earn money is therefore to fail. Not to choose the most lucrative means of earning money is to deserve failure. When Shelley refuses the easy life of a territorial magnate that he may write poetry, and Holman Hunt the career of an auctioneer that he may paint pictures, there are bound to be domestic censures and recriminations. To leave a University without a degree must need seem a most reprehensible proceeding, since the one object of going to a University is to obtain one; yet some of the greatest men have been guilty of this dereliction. How easy to write them down failures! How clear the note of contemporary scorn in the minds of dozens of successful comrades, for whom the University was a stage on the way to oblivion! And, if we could know the truth, how often the hearts of these same great men were embittered by the fear that, after all, they might be what the general verdict declared them—failures!

The striking thing about these contemporary judgments is that they have often proved ab-

surdly false. What appears failure is really the first phase of success. What appears success sometimes proves the worst kind of failure. John Keats might no doubt have succeeded as a physician, had he dismissed from his mind the lure of poetry, and given his entire attention to medicine. He would have had the proud satisfaction of writing John Keats, M.D., upon his door-plate, but he would never have written his name upon the page of Time. He would have lived respectably, and died respected; and would certainly have escaped what he himself called the fierce hell of relative failure in attempting great objects. He would have gone about his daily duties with a humble assiduity, and never would have had occasion to say in the bitterness of his heart, "My name is writ in water." But would all this have been success? What could have atoned to the world for the loss of the exquisite poetry which has gladdened the hearts of three generations: what could have atoned to him for the suppression of a gift so rare and wonderful? Not all the world's wealth, we say; and he would have said the same.

THE SUCCESS OF FAILURE

The success of failure is not less manifest in the lives of men of action. Here, for example, is a man of undying influence, who up to his thirty-fifth year was a total failure. He does not fail through indolence or lack of ambition; he is a fine scholar, and his aims in life are high; but he has not found himself. He makes many experiments in life, and fails in all. His last experiment is to become a missionary in Georgia. His failure here is so complete that he has literally to flee from the enmities that he had created. Who would have prophesied that in this defeated missionary would be found the great apostle of the eighteenth century? He himself had no suspicion of his destiny. If his clerical friends had been assembled in judgment on him, there is little doubt what their verdict would have been. One can overhear them talking in pompous wisdom of the folly of a man who had reached mid-life and had missed every opportunity of honor and preferment. Yet, as we read the story, we see with perfect clearness, that this long series of defeats lay at the root of Wesley's success. They were his apprentice-

ship for the great work of his life. Supposing he had been content to tread the beaten path of commonplace success, he might no doubt have been a Bishop, and to-day would have reposed forgotten, under a Latin epitaph in a rarely visited Cathedral. He refused the bribe, and to-day his name is written over all the habitable globe. He is among the greatest known examples of the success of failure.

Browning teaches the obverse of this lesson from a very human point of view, when he depicts the boy-student of art and the girl-student of music in their Paris garrets, each intent on high achievement, and each drawn to the other by a pure love. He wills to marry her, but dares not, for fear of being rash. He must win the earthly prize first, and then—who can tell? So the years pass, and each has prospered as the world counts prosperity; she has married “a rich old lord,” and he has become a knight, and a Royal Academician. Success? Hardly: for this is the verdict:

THE SUCCESS OF FAILURE

Each life unfulfilled you see,
It hangs still, patchy and scrappy;
We have not sighed deep, laughed free,
Starved, feasted, despaired—been happy.

Here is the obverse of the success of failure
—the failure of success.

The question becomes urgent then, what is success in life? The only possible answer I can find is that that life alone succeeds which attains the highest ends possible to its capacity. The definition is far from perfect, but it has at least the merit of freeing the whole question of success from the pressure of life's materialisms. Success is no longer a matter of fine clothes, fine houses, and abundant wealth; it has little to do with man's praise or dispraise; it admits no differentiation in the kinds of work which men attempt; it is in essence a question of being rather than of doing. The man who is a first-rate bookbinder, and does his work thoroughly and well, has succeeded as truly as the great poet whose pages he binds. The man who is a stone mason, carving his stone with the true craftsmanship of a medieval workman, has

left as imperishable a mark upon the great Cathedral, as the architect who designed it, or the artist who covered its walls with fadeless frescoes. The man who does little things well is of the same rank as he who does great things well, so long as each has worked to the full stretch of his several ability. And, on the contrary, the man who might have been a writer, a legislator, or a statesman, but has given his whole life to the accumulation of money, has failed, whatever he has gained. He has failed because he has not attained the highest ends possible to his capacity. The laborer in the fields, who, with the humblest powers, has used them to their highest range, is his superior. By how much more is he his superior, if he shall have found content, and healthful equipoise of mind, and the dignity of patience; for the life that follows the hot trail of material rewards knows nothing of these things.

To accept this view of success and act upon it needs a great deal of courage, for this, if for no other reason, that nine-tenths of the world will hold it in derision. To the ancient Deca-

THE SUCCESS OF FAILURE

logue the modern world has added a new commandment, "Thou shalt not be poor"; and under its breath it adds that as long as this commandment is obeyed it does not very much matter if all the rest be broken. From Alexander the Great to the latest American millionaire, success has been identified with material rewards. The modern child is inoculated at birth with the greed of money. He grows up in a society where money answereth all things. He is virtually taught by example, if not by implicit precept, that only the fool is poor. His imagination is constantly stimulated by the spectacle of ostentatious wealth. His choice of a vocation or profession is controlled not by ideals, but by rewards. How is he to resist this tremendous pressure of general opinion? He can only do it by cultivating the courage of individuality. He must learn to be himself, and to defend his own rights in himself. He has to live his own life and he must be bold enough to live it in his own way. If he knows that not all the money in the world could compensate him for the loss of an open-air existence, he must refuse the lure

of the city, and choose the simpler life in the country. If he knows that to paint a picture, or write a book, would represent for him the joy of the efficient effort as the most successful adventure in Wall Street could not do, let him paint his picture or write his book, and leave Wall Street alone. Even though he should fail of recognition as a great artist or a great writer, he will be the better man because he has used his best powers for high things, rather than his lower powers for low things. A failure which has brought our noblest faculties into play is better than a success which has disgraced them.

To live in this spirit implies a certain detachment from common ideals, which is possible only to a bold and brave temper. If we are the kind of persons who are humiliated because our clothes are of last year's cut, or our table is plain, or our house is in an unfashionable neighborhood, we had better attempt nothing of the kind. If we are restless and unhappy because we cannot keep pace with the social splendors of our neighbors, it would be wise to capitulate

THE SUCCESS OF FAILURE

at once to custom, for our final subjugation is inevitable. To obey a standard of life which is incomprehensible to our neighbors, probably needs as much courage as Luther manifested when he made his protest before the Archduke's splendid court. Yet it cannot really be so hard a thing as it seems, for so many men have done it. Such a life is based upon a rational perception that internals are more than externals, the life of a man more than the things he possesses. When a great nobleman, attended by his retinue, left the studio of Nicholas Poussin, he was surprised that the painter showed him to the door himself. "I pity you," he said, "for having no servant." "And I pity you, my lord, for having so many," flashed back the painter. Poussin was right. He had learned that there was no indignity in being his own servant; but there was indignity in the helplessness that needed so many.

There is still to be considered the case of the man who, as we commonly say, fails through no fault of his own. One may be allowed to question the plea, for it certainly needs a great deal

of proof which is not usually forthcoming. Harsh as the world is, it is not deliberately cruel; and where so many tasks call for active minds and willing hands, it cannot afford to be blind to real merit. Nevertheless, there undoubtedly are men who, for some unintelligible cause, find all things against them. Moreover, if success is the attainment of the highest ends possible to capacity, it is obvious that the very nature of social conditions dooms multitudes to failure. There is very little choice of avocation given to the poor; they must needs take up with the handiest employment that can win them bread. It is a truly tragic thought that probably three-fourths of the world's brain-power runs to waste. Multitudes of men are engaged in tasks far below the level of their inherent capabilities. Cæsar drives the plough, Aristotle serves in a dry-goods store, Milton is a ledger clerk. So far as native or potential endowment goes, there is little to choose between the king and the peasant. Genius itself is usually the product of a specialized culture. Without that culture it would never have blossomed. Nature

THE SUCCESS OF FAILURE

wastes a thousand seeds to perfect one, and men are wasted in the same fashion. What comfort can possibly be offered to the man who is the victim of social conditions which never offer his capacity full play?

It is a hard thing to frame a reply that shall not sound hypocritical: but it may be at least remembered that failure is a tragedy of the spirit rather than of the circumstances. If a man doomed to toil in obscurity shall retain the dignity of his spirit; if he shall remain cheerful, devout, kind-hearted; if he shall use such opportunities as he has to build "a city of the mind," and not allow jealousy or envy to blind him to the available happiness which springs like a well of cool water at every door; he draws the sting of hostile circumstance, and makes a real success out of external failure. When Jeremy Taylor was robbed of everything—honor, position, and estates—he quietly remarked: "They have left me the sun and moon. They have not taken away my merry countenance, and my cheerful spirit, and a good conscience." There is always left to a good and

T H E B O O K O F C O U R A G E

brave man much that cannot be taken away from him, and this is the only true wealth.

Even under the harshest conditions the courageous temper may do much also to modify or dissolve them. Men do constantly rise, especially in American life, from the lowliest positions to the highest. Whether men do so rise or not depends on courage far more than opportunity. Courage discovers opportunity. Courage does not obey circumstances, but creates them. Courage hears the call of adventure, and adventures happen only to the adventurous. The uncourageous man falls into his narrow groove, and blames the injustice of life for his misfortune. The courageous man gets out of the groove, takes up arms against outrageous fortune, will not be suppressed, takes risks with a high heart, and in the end conquers. In American life these two types are constant; the one adopts some safe, inglorious calling in an Eastern city, and is content with insignificance; the other goes West, and knocks at the door of opportunity till it opens to him. The differ-

THE SUCCESS OF FAILURE

ence between the two types is a difference of courage.

But even if it does happen that a man fails by no fault of his own, there is always a supreme consolation in the thought of the endless continuity of life. This world is not all, nor is this life the only life we have to live. "Well, well," says Thackeray, "a carriage and three thousand a year is not the summit of the reward nor the end of God's judgment of men." The evolutionary theory of life promises fruition for every power in which the germ-cell of fruition thrives. Thus life is at the most an apprenticeship to higher modes of living that are hidden from us. In the infinite perspective of life opened by evolution, we see every serviceable seed transplanted to a richer soil, every beautiful flower of faculty full-blown, every life reaching out toward more abundant life. Before such a vision no form of earthly failure seems of great moment, except the failures of the soul. The Divinest life that earth has ever known was a life that seemed to men the most tragic of all failures. And so indeed it would

THE BOOK OF COURAGE

have been if it had reached its end on Calvary. But it did not end there. Death, so far from destroying it, only liberated its eternal forces. It rose again. So does every life rise again that is lived well. It claims larger modes of living because it has become fitted for them. The law of waste seems triumphant here; but in the final economy of God nothing worthy of survival dies, nothing noble is wasted, nothing with the power of life can miss its evolution into larger life.

To take such a view of earthly life and circumstance calls for courage. It needs that high and rare courage which we call faith. Faith is the supreme courage. It is an easy and a cowardly thing to deny; it needs a supreme courage to believe.

III.

The Failure of Friendship

THE BUILDERS.

Not they alone who build the tower
Or bridge the gulf, are builders true:
When God would build himself a flower
His architects are sun and dew.

Unseen they work their magic craft,
From dawn-light until summer gloam,
Till perfect soars the lily's shaft
And round the sun-flower's golden dome.

When God would build himself a life,
Silent He labors, working through
The love of friend and child and wife,
Which is as sunlight and as dew.

O sacred hands that toiled for me!
O love less human than divine,
Whate'er I am, and yet shall be,
The building of my soul was thine.

III.

THE FAILURE OF FRIENDSHIP

MOST of us have heard the story of the famous man, who, being asked to state what had been the most important factor in his life, replied, "I had a friend." Who the friend was, how long the friendship lasted, what he said or did, was not revealed; but the impact of his influence was undying, and it shaped another life to greatness.

Of how many lives has this been the secret! John Keats had a friend called Joseph Severn. When Keats, already marked for death, had to go to Rome, he begged Severn to accompany him. Severn was a young man, an artist at the beginning of his career, with his own natural ambitions. He relinquished everything for the sake of the dying poet. Through many months of suffering he nursed Keats with the devotion of a mother, protected the sinking flame of his genius, and finally laid him in the grave. So perfect was his friendship that he never so

much as recognized the element of sacrifice it involved. When all was over, he wrote with an exquisite simplicity, "The advantages I have gained by knowing John Keats are double and treble any I could have won by any other occupation." But for the faithfulness of Severn we should have known nothing of the last days of Keats; and since it was the pathos of that closing tragedy which did more than anything else to attract the attention of the world to the poet's genius, possibly we should never have read his poetry. On the last page of Keats' biography there should be written, "He had a friend."

Alfred Tennyson had a friend named Arthur Hallam. How much Tennyson owed to the fine contagion of Hallam's genius we cannot know, but we do know that the influence of Hallam colored the entire life of Tennyson. The great epoch of Tennyson's poetry began with the death of Hallam. From that hour he passed from the rank of the poets who delight us by ingenious artistry into the rank of the seers who open to us the doors of ultimate vision.

THE FAILURE OF FRIENDSHIP

The friendship of Hallam, transposed into spiritual terms, was the "master-light of all his seeing." His presence was so distinctly felt that Tennyson could write of him:

Whatever way my days decline,
I felt and feel, though left alone,
His being working in my own—
The footsteps of his life in mine.

Upon the grave of the great poet in the solemn pomp of Westminster there might be fitly written, as the explication of all he was and did, "He had a friend."

Henry M. Stanley had a friend, who recognized the rare forces of his mind and character when he was a poor, half-starved waif in New Orleans. He gave the boy his chance. He directed the operations of his will, as yet inchoate and confused, toward worthy ends. He died, but his spirit still mixed with Stanley's. The deserted boy was destined for a great career. He achieved an imperishable fame. He played a large part in the Empire-building programme of the modern world, in the conquest of barbarism by civilization. So far as we can judge

nothing of this had been possible but for the friend he found in New Orleans. Over Stanley's grave also may be written: "He had a friend."

Such instances as these are sufficient to teach us how large a part friendship plays in the direction of human destiny. To have a friend may prove the most important of all factors in our life. It is not only the friend's part to counsel us in our unwisdom, to encourage us to strive for high ideals, to reinforce our timidity by his belief in us, but in the practical business of life it is very often the friend who opens for us the door of opportunity. Many a great career in business, in literature, in statesmanship, owes itself to friendship. Some fellow creature crosses our path at the opportune moment, finds his heart drawn to us, puts himself at our disposal, and the whole aspect of life is miraculously changed for us. It is commonly said that we carry our ancestors in our blood: it is equally certain that our friendships are inwoven in the most intimate fibre of our character. No life stands alone because no life is meant to stand alone. No man, however independent in a soli-

THE FAILURE OF FRIENDSHIP

tary strength, can dare to call himself the sole architect of his own career. The one is always the product of the many. To live without friendships is to cut ourselves off from the great tap-root of humanity.

Yet there are very few of us who go through life without the loss of friendships. I do not now speak of the friends who are taken from us by untimely death, but of the friends who are lost to us by tragedies less reconcilable than death. Sometimes a friend merely drifts out of our life. Other forces draw him from us, and we are filled with bitter wonder at our incapacity to retain him. Sometimes what begins as a mere divergence of opinion is pursued until it ends in violent separation. Sometimes a friend betrays us. Sometimes he fails us under stress. Sometimes the pride of life comes between us and him. Sometimes the growth of his mind does not keep pace with ours, or ours does not keep pace with his, so that we find ourselves moving on different levels, with no thoughts in common. It is clear he no longer values us. We try to maintain our old relations with him, until

self-respect rebels at his continual rebuffs. We call thrice on him for once that he seeks us. Or, it may be, a friendship is lost almost through inadvertence. We have assumed its constancy, but have done nothing to maintain it. It perishes by inanition. These unwitnessed tragedies enter into most lives at some period or other. Even Jesus could not retain the friendship of Judas.

When these things happen to us our natural tendency is to become cynical and embittered. "I will trust no man again," we say. Our confidence in human nature is shattered. We have found meanness where we expected generosity, indifference where we expected sympathy, detraction where we expected loyalty. We are overwhelmed by our discovery. We had no idea that such a hard vein of selfishness lay under our friend's character. We thought we knew him; it turns out that we knew only the surfaces of his nature. The existence of that other and hidden self, suddenly discovered to us as obstinate, proud, or cruel, we never so much as suspected. Our own lack of insight is a poign-

THE FAILURE OF FRIENDSHIP

ant humiliation. We have been too trustful, too emotional, too little on our guard. It would have been better for us if instead of following our emotions we had cultivated worldly-wisdom. It is plain enough that the world is composed of rogues, and the Psalmist need not have apologized on the score of haste for saying all men were liars. Henceforth we will treat all men as false until we find them true: and that is a very unlikely discovery. So we pour out the exasperations of a grieved heart, and we do not perceive that a truly brave man would never speak as we are speaking.

For the truly brave man is distinguished by a certain robust attitude toward life, and in nothing will his courage be more apparent than in the temper which continues to think the best of men when all the outward signs point to the worst. For example, he will recollect that most men are as good as they know how to be, and their failure of goodness is usually a failure of capacity rather than of will. If our friend's nature is too shallow to endure in the hour of stress, who is to blame? We are quite sure that

his own self-esteem would prompt him to act nobly, for no man is pleased to discover himself ignoble. If he does not act nobly it is because he cannot; life has subjected him to a test too severe; it is hardly his fault if his nature has not the depth of soil to produce heroic harvests. When Plato was told that a friend in whom he had trusted was speaking detractingly of him, he calmly replied, "I am sure he would not do it, if he had not some reason for it." The reason very often lies in moral deficiencies in the nature of the detractor, which have not yielded to education. The divinest prayer ever offered for enemies bases its plea for their forgiveness on the fact that "they know not what they do."

The brave man will also recollect that treachery and betrayal are after all far less common than love, loyalty, affection, constancy, devotion. Our experience of life must have been uniquely unfortunate if we have not found a dozen faithful friends for one unfaithful. It would be asking too much of life if we expected entirely flawlessness of nature in everyone we met; and, for that matter, are we ourselves so

THE FAILURE OF FRIENDSHIP

flawless that we have any right to expect it? It is both foolish and unjust to ask of others what we are not able to give them. Life being what it is, and men and women being what they are, we may be pretty sure that we shall come across the tares of perfidy, detraction, injustice, as well as the fine wheat of faith, honor, constancy, and love. Wheat and tares; but if the field of life has been well tilled, there will be much more wheat than tares. There was one Judas, who left the supper table to betray his Master; but there were eleven other disciples who remained. In this case the better elements of human nature stand as eleven to one against the baser. Possibly life itself observes the same ratio.

It may be worth noting that most of us are apt to lose friends by expecting too much from them. In our very young days we naturally have very exalted views of friendship. We are much influenced by such a classic example of heroic friendship as the Damon and Pythias story; forgetting that if this story is famous it is because it is unusual. Its rarity has ensured it immortality. Nevertheless, it sets the stand-

ard of friendship for us. We expect impossible loyalties in ordinary men and women, and never stop to ask if we are the sort of persons to evoke such loyalties. Or we have some intellectual or æsthetic standard by which we measure friendship. We cannot conceive an intimacy that is not based on common views and tastes. If we love books, or art, or music, we insist that the man who would be our friend should love them too, and in our own way. Mere love is not enough for us; we must have perfect correspondence of idiosyncrasy. A difference over questions of opinion, taste, manners, is as frequent a solvent of friendship as disloyalty. It would be well for us if we remembered the saying of a great man, who after an evening spent with his political opponent, remarked that they "had agreed in everything but opinion." Friendship is based on qualities of the heart rather than equalities of the mind. While we go about searching for intellectual equalities, kinships of taste, identities of opinion, we may be missing love. In our passion for the romantic we ignore the real.

THE FAILURE OF FRIENDSHIP

We carry our heads so high that we do not see the brook by the way, and the plain table in the wilderness that bears the bread of honest, simple affection.

Certainly we are all apt to forget the loyalty of the lowly. A man moving on the plane of a large life, among men whose tempers are sharpened by ambition, frequently judges friendship entirely by his immediate environment. He finds so much self-seeking, so many inferior motives that underlie apparent kindnesses, that he is apt to say with Emerson that "friendship, like the immortality of the soul, is too good to be believed." If he would improve his acquaintance with the simpler modes of existence, he would think differently. Are there not many plain people in the countryside where he was brought up, who do really love him for himself? Are there not old neighbors, old schoolmates, early companions long since left behind perhaps in the race for success, whose hearts are still open to him, like hospitable and warm houses, if he will but seek them? Nay; may there not wait for him, all unknown and

unvalued, in the heart of some old servitor a beautiful affection such as he can never find among his political or business associates, whose friendships have the shallowness of useful partnerships based on mutual advantage? If we would seek our friends among the lowly rather than the proud, we should soon discover that friendship is not too good to be believed.

There are, of course, friendships which are lost for high reasons that admit no compromise. If a man treads a lofty path it is likely to be lonely; and it will be the lonelier in proportion to its loftiness. The politician who pursues an honest path in the midst of knavish associates: the statesman who moves in the light of distant visions not visible to the self-seeking; the truth-seeker who scorns worldly motives, compliance with convention, and the rewards of profitable subservience; the business man who has ideals of justice which only excite the mockery of his competitors—the high-minded man in any walk of life, whether he be prince or burgher, merchant or humblest clerk, will not find it easy to keep many friends

THE FAILURE OF FRIENDSHIP

beside him on the road he traverses. Along the beaten ways a man travels in a crowd; when he dares the lofty summits only the few and fit can be his comrades. In high endeavor, as in misfortune, it is the worthiest who rally to us. It is only the heroic man who will dare such a fate, and even he will have his moments of despondence when he envies those who move in unthinking joy along the roads of life, with "troops of friends." It is a bitter moment for the most impassioned prophet, when he sits beneath his juniper tree in the desert and cries, "I, even I only, am left." But the desert is never quite solitary; there are angels in it, and chief of all the Angel of Courage. To keep the angels with us is a greater thing than to keep our friends. The ecstasy of that renewing moment when the angels speak with us may well atone for all human betrayals and desertions.

Perhaps it is part of the purpose of life, part of its wise ordering, that we should learn to stand alone. For a time parents support our feeble steps; then schoolmasters, older comrades, employers, friends; but in the end—and

T H E B O O K O F C O U R A G E

this is the end toward which each wrought—we have to learn to stand alone. We have to stand alone at last, as we very well know; for the time comes when the last strong hand is withdrawn, the cheerful counsellor is silent, the eyes for whose approval we wrought are closed, the last kindly face fades out of sight. Is it not wise to prepare ourselves for that inevitable hour? Since there waits for us a journey on which none can accompany us, were it not well to try our strength before we are submitted to so dire a test? We are all inclined to lean too much on friendship; to depend not on our own souls for strength, but on the strength that comes from other souls. So the building in process of erection has many props to support it; but as it nears completion prop after prop is knocked away, and it is secure only as it rises firmly in its own foundation. It was such a truth Paul had in mind when he spoke in the same breath of the duty of bearing the burden of others, and the duty of bearing our own burden. No friend can bear our burden for us; the most he can do is to help us to bear it well,

THE FAILURE OF FRIENDSHIP

prompting us to endeavor by his sympathy and wisdom. If we have so used friendship that we have lost the power to stand alone, we have misused it.

Let us remember, too, that although friendships which are visible may fail, there are invisible friendships which do not fail. We may find these invisible friendships among the prophets of unchanging truth, the masters of past heroisms, the witnesses to eternal beauty. No man is friendless who has comradeships in the unseen. And the door of the unseen swings upon such easy hinges that there is no man who cannot pass at will from the contentions of the common day into those realms of wisdom, where "beyond these voices there is peace." In that invisible realm there is no lack of friends even for the humblest guest. The greatest spirits of the past salute him. They meet him on equal terms. They unlock all their treasures for his use. They offer him a friendship over which Time has no jurisdiction, into which jealousy and envy cannot enter, immortal as their own achievements, fresh and living as

their own fame. As long as I have Jesus, Gautama, Paul for my friends; Virgil, Dante, Shakespeare for my daily comrades; I am rich in friendship, though all the companionships of earth have failed me; and their friendship is subject to no law of mutation or decay.

And into these friendships of the spirit no misunderstanding can enter. We are communing not with imperfect but with perfect intelligences. There was a day once, upon a mountain height, when certain dismayed disciples saw their master enter into a cloud and disappear. They did not understand his motive or his aim; and when he came back, and explained both in words of solemn wisdom, they still did not understand. But within that cloud Moses and Elijah met him. They understood.

IV.

On Facing Difficulties

There's a pain in the search for the high,
 There's an ache in the heart of the bird
Who seeks the top reach of the sky,
 By defeat undeterred.
Is it better to fail on the way
 To the highest, or live in the dust
With the reptile whose one holiday
 Is sunshine and lust?

There's a thirst in the heart of the tree
 When it lifts bridal arms to the Spring,
And covets to wear in its glee
 The sun's self for ring.
Is it better in vain to aspire
 For the thing that never can be,
Or grovel with hemlock and briar
 That feel not nor see?

What matter that such things are not?
 That we follow the glance and the gleam
Of a dream that no ending has got?
 Still, I say, let me dream.
I will dream of the nightingale's song,
 All the lyrical passion and rush,
And at last, when my yearning is strong,
 I may sing like the thrush.

I will search for what never was found,
 For the height and the light and the glow
Of impossible things I am bound,
 For glory comes so.
If I miss them, at least there's a bliss,
 Which within me is silently wrought:
I am better and nobler by this,
 O Soul, that I sought!

IV.

ON FACING DIFFICULTIES

IN the *Confessions of St. Augustine* there is a passage, peculiarly pregnant and suggestive, in which he describes the toilsome processes by which a child learns to speak. The tongue has to be "tamed" and "broken," he says to its unaccustomed task. Speech, in its intelligent forms, is not native, but acquired. That it should be acquired at all is a sort of miracle, and it is only acquired by infinite resolve and patience. It is the first struggle with difficulty which our frail human spirits encounter. With this struggle we begin to "launch out more deeply into the tempestuous traffic and society of mankind."

Any one who has watched the efforts of a child to accommodate itself to human environment, will feel the pathos and wonder of the spectacle as Augustine did. Here is this tiny atom of humanity, frail and delicate as a flower, set in the midst of tremendous forces, and in

order to take its place among mature human beings it must win a series of battles, beside which the campaigns of Cæsar seem insignificant. To begin with, it must develop a consciousness; it must learn to associate a hundred objects with arbitrary symbols; it must distinguish between things hurtful and things harmless, and tabulate the result of each experience upon the memory; while even to stand erect, after the manner of men, it must overcome the enormous pressure of gravitation. After these victories of infancy follow the yet more strenuous struggles of childhood; the acquisition of forms of knowledge that appear absurd and unnecessary; lesson-learning, with scarce so much as a glimpse of ultimate values; the subjugation of the young innocent animal to the will of the intellect. So the story runs, a story of "tempestuous traffic" with difficulties, which begins with the earliest breath and only closes with the last.

The story is not peculiar to man. The mother bird, teaching her young to fly, is engaged in the same kind of struggle. The grass-

ON FACING DIFFICULTIES

blade, thrusting its green spear up toward the blue sky, is also combatting the law of gravitation. The dragon-fly waves a victorious banner, as he flies mailed and splendid in the sunlight, for he has succeeded in living where a thousand comrades have perished. There is no humblest life that is not begirt with enemies. In every square yard of greensward there are fought out campaigns as momentous to the forms of life engaged in them as our greatest battles. Even a drop of water has its Armageddons. As for the sky itself, though it appears to us "clad in the beauty of a thousand stars," do we not know that it is in reality the most awful of all battle fields, where whole constellations sink like doomed Armadas, and worlds continually are born and perish? Bird and beast, leviathan and insect, man and the stars, are alike involved in cosmic struggle.

What then is this complaint that we so often hear—and make—that life is difficult? What right have we to expect anything else? Upon what ground do we base our plea for exemption? If we found man's life alone beset with

difficulties, we might suspect some injustice in the human lot; but when we find that all forms of life, from the lowest to the highest, suffer from the same stress, the most thoughtless of us might at least divine that what we may call the law of opposition has some sanction in that awful Wisdom which has planned the universe.

The law of opposition certainly appears justified in the large workings of collective human destiny. Harsh climates, niggard soils, penury and hardship, have constantly produced great races. Threatened nations, such as Holland, have been driven by the force of persecution into indissoluble unity and deliberate valor; and these have at last worn out the persecutors. A defeated people, driven lamenting from their homes among the hills, flee to the mud-flats of the Adriatic for security; and from those lonely waters, like a silver lily of the sea, rises the magnificence of Venice. In the same way English exiles, half-maddened with injustice, dare an awful ocean in tiny shallops, land upon iron shores, and there in the silence of the primeval forests, lay

ON FACING DIFFICULTIES

the foundations of a Republic greater far than the Venetian, and destined to a longer life. Was life easy or difficult to the people of the Netherlands in the days of William the Silent, to the founders of Venice, to the Pilgrim Fathers? It was supremely difficult, but therein lay its grandeur. The law of opposition working as it did through every force of injustice, tyranny and hardship, justified itself in its results.

The law of opposition works in individual lives with similar results. The men for whom life is made too easy by birth and circumstance have rarely written their names among the illustrious. It is a matter of common observation that the sons of great men seem born to obscurity, for they accomplish nothing. Does not part of their failure lie in the fact that they have never been tested by the difficulties of life as their fathers were? They started on an easier plane of circumstance, and by so much the power of initiative was diminished in them. Human lives are like kites; they soar highest when the string is drawn tightest. Or, if we

may borrow an illustration from the sky-daring towers of New York, it is the narrowness of the base that makes the height inevitable. Venice builds her palaces in the sea itself, New York thrusts them upward into perilous heights of air; each miracle is the product of opposition. Human lives are built into greatness by similar pressures of circumstance. Withdraw the pressure, rid life of difficulty, and the architecture of life must needs follow a meaner and less conspicuous plan.

Nothing in famous lives is more noticeable than the unpromising nature of their beginnings. A study of these beginnings almost justifies the proverb that genius is simply the art of taking infinite pains. Demosthenes stammered. Lacordaire, on his first appearance as an orator, failed so completely that every one said, "This is a man of talent, but he will never be a preacher." The same thing was said to John Watson in his early ministry: "You may become a pastor, but you will never be a preacher," was the candid criticism of one of his church officials. Such stories may be paral-

ON FACING DIFFICULTIES

leled in every realm of biography. Nor could it be said that the deficiencies which provoked these criticisms, did not exist. They did exist, and the criticisms, cruel as they were, were based on truth. No one knew the truth more clearly than the men themselves; but herein lay their greatness,—they humbly set themselves to work to replace deficiencies with efficiencies. Their very failures stimulated the passion to succeed. Difficulties drew out their latent strength. They learned to master their weapons under the discipline of repeated failure, till in the end they acquired a skill so perfect that failure was forgotten in triumph.

One of the commonest delusions of life is that our own particular lot is the most difficult of all lots. It is natural that we should think so, for we know most about it. On this subject, at least, we are supremely well-informed. We can furnish a very damaging and entirely truthful schedule of our own disabilities. In moments of self-pity, we recite this schedule to ourselves; our imperfect education, narrow environment, scant opportunity, pov-

erty, long hours of labor, and so forth; until we begin to believe that life, which has treated so many men with favor, has followed us with an importunate and undeserved malice. "They have a fine time—these artists, musicians, writers"—we cry—"whose examples are always being intruded on us. They neither toil nor spin; they simply indulge a natural faculty, and find that it brings them wealth. What work is there—real work—in spreading paint on a canvas, or in fiddling, or in writing stories? Why, it is a pastime. Let them exchange lots with me, go to an office every day, toil amid the clamor of machinery, till the soil, give the toll of aching muscles for the poorest pay, and then they would know what work is. Pray, what do such men know of difficulties?"

Well, it may seem a small thing, in the sum of the world's vast activities—such as subduing continents, building fleets and railways, adding slow stone to stone in the great epics of material development—merely to be an artist, a musician or a writer, and perhaps it is; but there can be no manner of doubt that the lives

of such men present not less, but more of the elements of difficulty than almost any lives that can be named. The art of Leighton could not have been very easily attained when we find eighty sketches necessary for a single picture; nor the much greater art of Turner, which is represented not alone by a score of immortal paintings, but by more than twenty thousand drawings which have been preserved, to say nothing of those that perished. Nor can even the art of playing a violin be devoid of difficulty, when one of the greatest of violinists laid down the rule that for moderate success twelve hours' work a day for twenty years might be considered essential. Nor can it be precisely a pastime to write even a story which the world values, when we find Stevenson writing his chapters six times over, and George Eliot telling us that the writing of *Romola* found her a young woman and left her an old woman. As for the more worldly side of such employments; the years of toil for the scantiest of gains, the slow recognition, the precarious chances of success, the frequent brevity of triumph, the difficulty

not only of reaching the high standard, but of maintaining it—do not these things compose a tableau of oppositions, a series of searching tests, unmatched in any other kind of life? If we are in the habit of quoting the careers of great artists and writers as examples of courage under difficulties, it is simply because such examples are the most vital and illustrious in human history. It needs courage, no doubt, to maintain one's fighting power in the environment of humble toil; be sure of it, it needs a yet finer courage, to pursue the rarest kinds of toil amid the world's entire indifference or expressed contempt, until at last the world admits a power which it never should have doubted.

Here also, as in other things, the law of opposition is in reality the law of growth. Repression calls forth finer faculties, as pruning develops finer fruit. The high thing is always the hard thing. Where life is made easy, either for men or nations, manhood dwindles. The man who inherits a business is rarely the equal of the tough old sire who founded it, built it

ON FACING DIFFICULTIES

from the bottom upward, put sweat and blood into it. He may have finer faculties, but the lack of opposition has left them dormant. We miss the iron of resolution in his blood, the fighting valor in his eye. Hence also it happens that many a man's true rise in life has dated from his bankruptcy. He has had to lose everything before he could gain anything. If he has lost inherited wealth, he has gained in moral equipment; having to fight for himself he has developed the fighting quality. Few greater wrongs are perpetrated by the rich than the wrong which bequeathes vast sums of money to their children. In nine cases out of ten such children are doomed to a stultified existence. It is hardly their fault, since they are robbed of the very incentive of achievement by the kind of life imposed upon them. Mercifully, however, life itself in its slow levelling processes, does something to amend the wrong. There is beatitude as well as irony in the saying that "from shirt-sleeves to shirt-sleeves it is only three generations." That is to say, wealth bequeathed to the inefficient does not stay with them; they

lose by inefficiency what the efficiencies of others gave them.

Strange as it may appear, yet it is true that the struggling years of life are often the happiest:

“The virtue lies
In the struggle, not the prize.”

A man goes forth to subdue the wilderness, pits himself against elemental forces, labors in heat and cold, in deprivation and hardship; yet never counts his lot hard or makes complaint, and why? Because he has a prize in view, and every stroke of the axe in the forest, every sod of wild land turned by the plough, brings his triumph nearer. A man, poor in all but brain and will, plunges into the tremendous vortex of the city, plans great things for himself, toils remorselessly, stints himself of food, rest, pleasure; yet meets each laborious day with exultation, because it is for him a new stepping-stone toward the power or wealth he covets. Unambitious people who plan their lives on the line of least resistance, will not understand these things; but every man who has ever had an am-

ON FACING DIFFICULTIES

bition will know how real this joy of struggle is. It is the truth of Browning's line again:

"Starved, feasted, despaired—*been happy.*"

The lonely prairie, with its secret hint of Paradise, the lonelier garret peopled with its splendid dreams, the joyous intuition of success in the worst hours of failure, the sense of the hovering wings of Chance,—the thrill, the hazard, the daring, the despair and exultation of it all—ah, life can offer us no other hours like these, none that in the long retrospect of years will have seemed so wonderful, or so well worth living. When the prize so eagerly pursued is won, life is apt to decline into flatness and desuetude. The thrill has gone out of life, the sparkle and freshness, when struggle is withdrawn. We are rich at last, but we discover too late that the anticipation of riches was a much happier thing than their possession. We are famous; and behold the only good thing about fame was the quest of fame. Arrive at what goal we will, it is a sad affair for us; for with our arrival the quest ceases, and the spirit of quest is the best thing life has to offer us.

T H E B O O K O F C O U R A G E

The heroic nature does not complain of the difficulties of life; it rejoices in them. Its temper rises at the challenge of obstacles, as the war-horse frets at the sound of trumpets. Its abiding faith is that

One crowded hour of glorious life
Is worth an age without a name.

Given the choice of a hard or easy task, it will always choose the hard. That is why so many young men turn away from placid conventional modes of existence in great cities to the known hardships and the unknown perils of the pioneer in new untamed lands. They hear the call of the wild, but the most animating note in that call is difficulty. To measure their strength against the sullen hostility of Nature, to dare the forces of flood, fire and hurricane in the waste places of the earth, to take their chances in a high spirit of adventure, to stake their lives upon a chance,—this is life indeed! Difficulty is for these men a tonic, that braces them for conquest. A life, so padded with ease that it had no difficulties, would appear to them so

ON FACING DIFFICULTIES

flat and tame a life that it would not be worth the living.

We are told that at Trafalgar, while Nelson was exclaiming, "See how that brave fellow Collingwood takes his ships into action," Collingwood was saying, "What would Nelson give to be here!" They understood each other perfectly, these two old heroes; the only rivalry there had ever been between them was for the post of danger. "Give me only the command of a cockle-boat and I will be content," Nelson had once written to the Admiralty, "but inactivity I cannot endure." "Westminster Abbey or Victory," was his characteristic cry as he went into the battle of St. Vincent. There spoke the high-breathed heroic soul, dauntless, intrepid, athirst for glory, uplifted and consecrated by lofty visions, counting no earthly fate so splendid as courageous death in the hour of conquest. No wonder he has become the ideal hero of his race. Through all time he will move before the eyes of men, a slight boyish figure, without friends, without influence, surmounting one by one difficulties that appear

T H E B O O K O F C O U R A G E

insuperable, standing at last on the highest pinnacle of fame, conspicuous in a solitary glory—frail, maimed, immortal.

His country *expected* duty from its sons, he said. Duty is expected of men because they have the power of duty. Man, at his noblest, always knows how to turn difficulties into duties.

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V.

On Losing Money

THE ADVENTURE.

He sat within a house of pride,
Walled in with walls of gold;
A decorous order froze the blood,
And left his spirit cold.

Far-off he saw the citied world;
At night, like some lone bird,
Romance sang at his window-pane:
He heard, but never stirred.

One day an earthquake shook the house;
Beam, buttress, cope and frame
Fell into utter dust—and lo,
His soul leapt up like flame!

For the first time he saw the skies,
High-vaulted, spacious, far;
He yearned to walk their streets of stars,
And find his special star.

He thought he saw it beckon him,
He followed where it led;
He trod a flame-mouthed scarp, he trod
Among a thousand dead.

He battled over blood-stained seas,
Marched over desert sands,
Hewed down the poison-tree of Wrong
That cursed a hundred lands.

He flew his flag from pole to pole;
The many things he did
Are written on the Arctic berg
And on the Pyramid.

He wrought to justify his soul,
To build a nation's might;
Froze, fasted, suffered, burned—and died
On glory's topmost height.

The gold he lost was only dross;
The gold he found became
A special star, which signals Time
With an immortal name.

V.

ON LOSING MONEY

ONE of the most brilliant of modern satirists has declared that the only real loss is the loss of money. It is to be observed, however, that he was a bachelor. Had he known what it meant to lose a wife in the fulness of her bright capacities, or a child in the first fresh unfolding of intellect and beauty, he might have written differently.

There is this much, however, to be said for the epigram, that the loss of money has a more immediate and practical effect upon our material life than any other kind of loss. Our material life may be changed in no particular by the losses that crucify the affections, fill the memory with sad and solemn spectres, and inflict upon the heart wounds that Time can never heal. Our secret thoughts may be as mourners bowed before the dim-lit shrine of a perpetual sorrow; but our public thoughts still mingle with the world's intercourse. The fixed habits of our lives are unaltered. We eat, drink, clothe

ourselves, move among our fellow men, pursue our avocations much as we always did, although from time to time we have a bitter sense of the emptiness of the life we lead. In the first anguish of our grief we may think that we have done with life; but life has not done with us, and soon succeeds in imposing on us its irresistible yoke of custom. We may desire to flee as broken-hearted people once fled to the Theban desert, but modern life has no deserts. Men tell us bluntly that the best cure for grief is employment, and we sullenly submit to what we know to be "the common-sense of most." If the only loss that can be accounted real is that which plays havoc with the outward disposition of our lives, then it is true enough that the worst impoverishments of the heart are out of the category.

On the other hand, the loss of money has immediate, practical, and often tragic social results. We must needs take a lower social position, occupy a smaller house, curtail our old free-handed hospitalities, dress worse, fare more roughly, lose many pleasant acquaintances,

strip ourselves pretty thoroughly of a score of old familiar habitudes. We must exchange our former cheerful manners, our slightly domineering ways of speech and temper, for the humbler manners that befit the conquered and the fallen. Those very ways of speech, brightly insolent, audaciously unconventional, which men rather admired in us when we were rich, will now kindle their resentment. We must learn to say *Sir* to people who once "sirred" us, and we must grow familiar with a score of hurting proverbs, such as "Beggars cannot be choosers." We, who loved books, must learn to pass the bookshop as Ulysses passed the rocks of the Syrens, with ears tightly waxed against their innocent seductions. We, who took such joy in travel, may lay it to our account that we shall never see the Alps again, or the woods of Maine, or the palm groves of California. We, who disposed of our own time with such careless caprice, must learn that each mortgaged minute is held in fee by a master who will see that he gets his full due. We have dropped in a day down whole scales of social difference, from the

freeman to the helot. A single foolish investment, a check signed in the fraction of a minute and handed to a faithless friend, a day's unwisdom on the Stock Exchange has produced all these dire results. Whatever else may be thought or said about such losses, there is no doubt that they are real enough.

In our moments of reflection—and there are plenty of them,—we are filled with astonishment that the possession or the loss of a sum of money wholly insignificant against the vast capital of the world, can mean so much. It seems a thing incredible that so small a circumstance should entail the forfeiture of honor, respect, friendship, good-will; the exchange of the world's ~~praise~~ for the world's indifference or contempt. There seems a radical injustice in it all, a flaw in the universal order. We did not know men could be so cruel. We had always lived with kind, courteous, generous people, or so we thought. Now it appears they have all become on a sudden unkind, discourteous, mean-hearted. And here begins the tale of moral loss, for few of us can lose money without losing

faith in man. We are apt to grow querulous, envenomed, embittered. We try not to be jealous of the prosperity of others, but we know well enough that envy gnaws our heart. We forget entirely any part our own folly may have played in our disaster, and parade ourselves as victims. We indulge ourselves in long, baseless, foolish dreams of revenge; those silent wasting dramas of the heart, in whose last act we always picture ourselves triumphant over the scorn of false friends and "the malignity of bankers." Before we know it, our entire nature has deteriorated. Here also is a kind of loss which is real enough.

When we think of these things it is easy to understand that a cynical observer of the surfaces of life should declare that money losses are the only real losses. How many families have we seen wholly disrupted and dispersed by the loss of money! "Oh, his circumstances have changed," we say lightly of some neighbor; but who can forecast the ultimate effects of such a change? On what last shore does the impact of the wave break? How many innocents, some of

whom are yet unborn, will be overtaken by it, and sucked down into dreadful gulfs? The son loses his university education, and in him dies a potential scholar, a leader of men, or the shining light of a liberal profession. The daughter loses her opportunities of marriage, is happy if she find some insignificant employment, and drifts out of sight on the wide ocean of obscurity. In the lonely places of the earth, separate from the full life of intellectual men, are found these innocent inheritors of parental misfortune. The children's children are burdened with the same bequest of disability; and so, in Lady Macbeth's phrase, the line stretches out to the "crack of doom." Not sins and crimes alone are visited on the children from the fathers, until the third and fourth generation; but also misfortunes incurred long ago through weakness, folly, or the misjudgment of a too generous and trustful temperament.

This is a terrifying indictment, which might well turn the most lavish of us into misers. It is so formidable that we instinctively cry that there must be another side which claims a hear-

ing, and indeed there is. The counsel for the other side, which, if I mistake not, is our own better self, may very well begin his oration with the statement that it can hardly be the Divine intention that money should play so large a part in human affairs, since the great majority of mankind have so little of it, and nevertheless contrive to live with a fair degree of happiness. Money is, after all, an artificial arrangement. Its intrinsic value is small, for if gold were as plentiful as copper, as it very well may be in another century, it would be worth no more. There are already tribes of men who use cowrie shells as a media of exchange, and to all intents and purposes shells serve as well as bank-notes or coined gold. There are other tribes that have got on sufficiently well for a thousand years or more without a coinage, or anything that answers to it. In primitive modes of life all wealth is derived directly from the soil, and he who can exchange the surplus of the wheat that he has raised for the surplus of fruit which his neighbor may have raised, gets on just as well as though he had stores and banks which

conduct their business by the exchange of financial symbols. He gets on better, indeed: for he gives something of intrinsic value for something else of equal intrinsic value, and is not liable to be cheated in the transaction. Moreover, he does actually produce something; he must produce in order to live; if he does not work neither does he eat; whereas, under the modern and artificial social system he who produces nothing feeds the best,—as, for example, the money lords of Wall Street and Throgmorton Street, and their innumerable satellites. If one race can live without money, another can; at all events, it is a reasonable presumption that money has not nearly so intimate a relation to social happiness as we suppose.

However, since we do live in an artificial society we may concede that none of us can do without money altogether; but it is surprising to discover how little we really need. The larger part of our expenditure arises not from our necessities but from our artificial wants. We can live as comfortably in a small house as a large, and with less actual anxiety; and if the

object of clothing be to defend us from inclement weather, we are as well served by one suit a year as twenty. It is a sad irony on the human wisdom which has been contriving plans of living for so many centuries that, after all, with average men, the largest expenses of life go to keeping up appearances. The worst of this kind of expense is that a man pays a part of his soul with his money; for nothing puts so heavy a mortgage on the spirit as this base business of keeping up appearances. Thoreau found by actual experiment that he could live as well as he desired on less than one hundred dollars a year. Without recommending, or attempting to practise Thoreau's methods, we may profitably recollect that some of the greatest men have known how ^{to} live greatly on less money than a rich man spends for his cigars in a twelvemonth. Emerson lived loftily and well on the most exiguous rewards, and Carlyle laid the foundations of his fame in the austere poverty of Craigenputtock. The ironical motto of the early Edinburgh reviewers was to the effect that they cultivated literature on a little

oatmeal, and if a man will be content with oatmeal he can go a long way in literature. At all events, when we find men who, by common consent, are the superiors of princes, living upon less than princes pay their grooms, it is obvious that money does not play a high part in the best forms of human achievement. This is taking no account of saintly and apostolic lives, which have asked nothing of the world, not even fame, but have given everything to it.

That man has lived unobservantly who has not discovered that the purchasing power of money is very much less than it appears. If I have enough money to buy shelter, food and raiment; to maintain some commerce with the best intelligences through books and education; I have bought the best things in life, and the richest man can do no more. He can buy more sumptuous shelter, rarer food, and finer raiment, but that is all. As for commerce with the best intelligences, he is usually too busy making money to care about that; and in any case this is a sphere in which his wealth can do singularly little for him. Some of the best things

in life he cannot buy at all, for they are not in the market. He cannot buy more sunlight than I, or more fresh air, or more refreshing slumber. In fact, the rich man's case is quite deplorable. He has so much to spend that values cease to exist for him. We value things in the proportion to the degree of exertion which is necessary to possess them; but where we can buy everything, nothing is valuable. A single book which I have bought at the price of self-denial will give me more pleasure than the entire library of a rich man, bought by the yard. As regards mere material surroundings the richest man cannot live in more than one house at a time, or sleep in more than one bed. I can do the same. The only difference is that my house and bed have cost me less. If my shelter is as sound and my sleep as sweet as his, I am his equal. If he lie awake at night meditating how to make more money or fearful of losing what he has, and I sleep soundly, I am his superior. When it comes to waking, the sun shines for me as for him, and more brightly, for I meet it with

a more grateful heart, and perhaps a better conscience.

So far as high achievement goes, nothing is more fatal than to start with a golden burden on the back. Penury is not a pleasant thing, but it is at least a spur to exertion, while wealth is a deterrent. It is exceedingly doubtful if we should ever have heard of Thackeray if he had not lost his fortune. He had a certain small talent for art, and enough money to make him a dilettante artist; and there he would have remained, hanging round Parisian studios, and living the life of a man of pleasure, had not a providential thief run off with his fortune. The necessity for work discovered his capacities, and in the end produced that immortal transcript of life known as "*Vanity Fair*." The story is an old one, and oft repeated. It is indeed typical. If we know anything of ourselves it must be pretty well aware that we are not naturally lovers of work; at heart we still conceal the indolence of the bland savage. The necessity of bread has always been, and always will be the strongest incitement to exertion. When the rau-

cous voice of the world shouts at us, "Work or perish," we must needs take stock of our capacities; and as we mine down into those secret veins, we are often surprised at the kind of ore we discover. To mine for that inner gold we must be stripped to the skin as miners are. A burden of gold upon the back is a fatal disability.

If a man has lost his money, his first act should be to ascertain precisely what it is he has lost, and what remains. He has lost money. Well, since some men, and among them the greatest, have never had any to lose, he cannot be so very badly off, after all. He has been transferred to another class in the great school of life, and that is all; possibly he may find upon acquaintance that he had not gone down but up, for his new comrades are nobler than his old. If he have left to him health, honor, self-respect, and an appetite for the things that are more excellent, he is not to be pitied, for he is still rich. When Andrew Marvel was offered by Lord Danby, who had visited him in his garret, a thousand pound note at parting, Marvel's re-

ply was to call his servant to testify that there was enough meat left on yesterday's shoulder of mutton for to-day's dinner, and that therefore he was not in want. Marvel could dine on cold mutton forever, if needs be, but he could not be bribed. The man who has honor left has a magic sauce which gives paradisaal flavors to the meanest crust; but be sure of it, there is no more indigestible meal than dishonor.

When a man has lost money, if he still continues to think the lost money necessary to his happiness, the best thing he can do is to set about recovering it. A thing that can be lost is a thing that can be found. I have met old men, concerning whom their friends have whispered admiringly, that they have lost two fortunes and made a third—the last one perhaps when they were sixty or seventy. One is tempted to say that they might have been better employed. If a man can make three fortunes in thirty or forty years, it certainly cannot be a very difficult thing to accomplish. Judging by the kind of persons who make the most money, one would be inclined to say that there is no

pursuit known to man that employs a lower order of intelligence. There is nothing so well calculated to raise the spirits and stimulate the self-respect of a cultured poor man, as to spend an evening in the company of very rich men, who are frequently the dullest of mankind. Their dullness arises from the narrowness of their interests—that “narrowing lust of gold” of which Tennyson speaks with a true spiritual insight.

Nevertheless there is one feature which is quite admirable in my three-fortuned friend; he had the grace of courage. He might have been better employed, indeed; but since this was the only kind of employment he understood, he was better doing this work than doing nothing. Many men would have succumbed at the loss of the first fortune, and collapsed utterly when fortune number two disappeared; but he was built of sterner stuff. To begin again at sixty, with cash and credit gone; to rebuild upon the ruin a new edifice, under the eyes of many who doubted, some who derided, and very few who sympathized, was, after all, a kind of heroism.

Every one has heard the story of the marshal who rode up to Napoleon, just as evening cast its shadows over a disastrous field, and cried: "Sire, the battle is lost!" Napoleon, pale and calm as a statue, pointed to the sky and said, "The sun has not set yet. Before that sun sets there is time to win another battle." The words of the great captain flashed like magnetic flame through the discouraged host; the "lean locked ranks" swept down with shoutings to the charge, and before the sun had set the other battle was won. There is always time for another battle; and no man can be really defeated who does not acquiesce in his defeat. There are few more inspiring sights than to see men around whose feet the sunset shadows gather, still fighting as though it was the morning light they hailed; and even though that fight be for so poor a thing as gold, the poorness of the end is almost redeemed by the greatness of the spirit it evokes.

For, in the end, it is always true that all defeat is self-inflicted. As for money, since it is certain that we must lose it one day, it should not occasion us either great surprise or inordi-

ON LOSING MONEY

nate grief, if we lose it a little earlier than we expected. What we are remains a thing apart from what we possess. The real defeats of life happen not upon the field of our possessions, but in our own hearts ; and he is still undefeated who does not know when he is defeated.

VI.

On Sudden Tragedy

THE CONTRAST.

For the men of small endeavor let the bed be made
of wool,
Let flesh and mind and spirit have no traffic with
the Night;
For such the bed is pleasant, and the fragrant pillow
cool,
And they hear not in the heavens the trampling
steeds of Light.

For the men of high endeavor the bed is built of fire;
They cannot sleep for anguish, so strong their spirit
yearns
To climb God's topmost stairway in the heat of their
desire,
And gather from the Tree of Night God's highest
star that burns.

Which were better when the Night ends and there
breaks the awful Dawn,
To have dreamed in fruitless slumber, to have lain
supine and gross,
Or to have known the flame-wound, wherefrom the balm
is drawn
That heals a multitude of men?—The Palace or
the Cross?

Who stands highest in God's audit when the books are
all made up,
He who spent his strength in pleasure, for whom
the world sufficed,
Or he who dared to struggle and to drink the bitter
cup?
The gold-crowned or the thorn-crowned? Cali-
gula or Christ?

VI.

ON SUDDEN TRAGEDY

IN the Litany we are directed to pray for deliverance from many evils, among which are named "battle, murder, and sudden death." Battle and murder are clearly evils, but why sudden death is included in the category is not apparent. Cæsar was of opinion—so Montaigne reminds us—"that the least premeditated death was the happiest and easiest—'He grieves more than he need, that grieves before he need.' " Most wise and many good men will agree with Cæsar. Death, since it must come, cannot come too quickly; to die by one blow of the sword is surely a happier fate than to be driven out of our house of life by a long siege, with its familiar and sad features of many assaults, slow starvation, and reluctant subdual. If a wise man could be offered the choice between some malady that breaks down the physical forces by prolonged pain, destroys the mind inch by inch, makes former strength and beauty

an irony, reduces wisdom and intelligence to the level of a pitiable idiocy,—and the swift bullet, the thunderbolt, the instantaneous arrest of life in sleep, the passing out of life as one passes into another room in the fulness of uncorrupted powers—there is little doubt what his choice would be. He would certainly be more inclined to pray for sudden death than against it.

Nevertheless, there is some obscure instinct in us which makes suddenness appear dreadful. We picture to ourselves a man talking with us one moment in jest and with laughing lips, and the next forever silent; or rising in the morning in the full flush of his happiness, and by nightfall stricken down by some calamity entirely unsuspected or uncalculated; and, reason how we will, we are appalled by the suddenness of the transition. We think that had the man been warned of the approach of calamity, he might have steadied himself against the blow, and have had time to arm himself with fortitude. It appears a cowardly act to spring the attack with such abruptness. Very possibly, if we knew the victim's own thoughts, or if he were in a position to

ON SUDDEN TRAGEDY

communicate them to us, they would entirely contradict ours. We may very likely be expending pity where it would be more rational to offer congratulation. The victim of calamity might very possibly retort that the one mercy in his tragedy was that it did find him unwarned; for had he been warned his strength would have been broken by consternation and dismay. Forewarning, foreknowledge, premeditation could have altered nothing in the event itself, and it is hard to see how they could have bettered our own attitude to the event. The only true wisdom appears to be to live so resolutely and reposedly that we are able to meet death and calamity, should they come upon us suddenly, in the same temper.

We moderns do not believe in the caprices of the goddess of Fortune as the ancients did; although there are few of us who are quite free from the superstition of luck and ill-luck. Persons who in all the large affairs of life are luminously rational, will hesitate to pass under a ladder, to cut their nails or start upon a journey on a Friday, to sit down thirteen at table,

to see the new moon through glass, or to perform a number of similarly innocent acts which appear to have no conceivable relation to human destiny. It has happened to me to travel on four successive Saturdays in the chair of a parlor car labelled thirteen; and when I remarked upon the circumstance the ticket agent informed me that this was a seat he could never sell, and this was the reason why I had it. Steamboat companies and many hotels have gone further, for they have deleted the fatal number from their state-rooms and bedchambers. No one can pretend, or ever has pretended, that superstitions of this kind are based on reason; nor are they even based on experience, for a thousand persons may walk daily under ladders without accident; and as for travelling by sea, it is hard to comprehend what advantage one state-room has over another, should the ship take fire or founder. Yet they are based on something, or they would not be so general; and that something is a kind of instinct which informs us that life deals treacherously by us, that there is in human affairs an element that looks

like caprice, that we are never safe from misfortune, that when we least expect it, and probably at the very height of our prosperity, our luck may fail us.

No better exposition of this feature of life can be found than in that poignant drama known as the Book of Job, which, as we all recollect, ranks among the sacred books of the world. The misfortunes of Job are ill-luck upon a colossal scale. There is no element of reason in them, and the dramatist is at pains to show us that they are wholly undeserved. In a single day Job's cattle are raided by the Sabeans, his flocks are destroyed by lightning, his servants are slain by the Chaldeans, and his sons perish miserably by the collapse of the house in which they were feasting. Thus, in a moment, the entire course of life is reversed for the patriarch; by the process of cumulative tragedy he is made poor, childless, and as we learn later, is broken in spirit and diseased in body.

Tragedy is here both sudden and cumulative, and it is vain to disguise the fact that this

is eminently characteristic of human life. Cannot we recall many instances of men who up to a certain point of life knew nothing but good fortune, and beyond that point nothing but misfortune? The turning-point is so definite that it can be accurately fixed. They can name the very day when the cloud no bigger than a man's hand appeared in the fair sky of their success. It began with a business loss, slight in itself, which proved to be the first in a series of reverses, against which no sagacity could have provided. In the midst of this trouble a favorite child died, or health broke down. One by one the props of life and of prosperity were knocked away, as if at the bidding of some relentless inscrutable assailant. The mind is staggered by the sense of something unnatural in the long run of ill-luck, of a silent hostility against which contention is vain; the very stars in their courses fight against us. What is to be said or done in such hours? By what force of virtue—or virility—can man face the sorrows that come not singly but in battalions, and do

battle with "a sea of troubles," which like the sea seems infinite?

Let us take a case. A man of genius, full of a poet's sensitiveness, stands at the beginning of his career. He comes home one day to find that his sister in a fit of madness has killed her mother and wounded her father in a homicidal struggle. In a moment the full cup of life is dashed from his lips and he sees before him the long sterile years over which the cloud of an irreparable sorrow rests. Had Charles Lamb followed his sister to the mad-house it had not been surprising, for he knew, and we know better than he, upon how unstable an equilibrium his genius rested. Because he knew it, he instantly girds himself for an immortal struggle. He writes to Coleridge: "Thank God, I am very calm and composed, and able to do the best that remains to do. With me 'the former things are passed away,' and I have something more to do than feel." "Something more to do than feel"—this is the secret of that tranquillity which those who do not understand him, so he says, interpret as indifference. He takes the whole

burden of the tragic mutilated household on himself. He resists the counsel of his elder brother to shut up Mary Lamb for life in Bedlam. He wins her back to sanity by his faith, his tenderness, his unalterable affection. In the end she becomes the sharer of his literary toils, and is known and loved for her own nobleness of gift and character. In the tragic hour Coleridge wrote his friend: "I look upon you as a man called by sorrow and anguish and a strange dissolution of hopes, into quietness and a soul set apart and made peculiar to God." Would it be too much to assert that Lamb was indebted to that experience of sudden tragedy for much that was most beautiful and tender in his nature; that whatever frailties may be charged against him, the courage he learned and practised in acquaintance with misfortune, has given him rank among the greatest heroes of his race?

Take another case. No man of our times whom I have known ever impressed me with so strong a sense of perfect manhood as Henry Drummond. He lived as one for whom it was

a real bliss to be alive. He seemed to unite physical strength, great gifts of mind and spirit, personal fascination, the happiest temperament, and fortunate social circumstances. All that he touched prospered. He attracted friends, and there was no friend he made who would not have gone great lengths to serve him. He influenced men, almost artlessly; his mere glance evoked faith and love. His books had an instantaneous and extraordinary success. It seemed as though life had poured its gifts without stint into his lap, knowing he could be trusted not to misuse them. Then, in a single hour, all is changed. He stoops to pick up a book, feels a sharp rending pain, and discovers that it is his death warrant. He is doomed to die by a strange disease, almost unexampled; a slow decay of the skeleton, a prolonged crucifixion. What does he do? He instantly adjusts himself to the inevitable. He not only did not complain; he set himself to retain his spirit of joy, "his keenness, his mental elasticity, his universal interest." Friends who went to comfort him found him much readier

to give them comfort than to receive it. He met them with jests, with good stories he had saved up for them, with bright discourse that totally ignored his own anguish. One of these friends said, "I have never seen pain or weariness, or the being obliged to do nothing, more entirely overcome; treated, in fact, as if they were not." He treated them as though they were not, because for him they were not. He had always lived in the faith that the spirit of man is superior to its environment; he practiced that faith to the last, and in the courage of his dying made death appear a dull absurdity.

The story of another man whom I have known is fully as heroic, though not perhaps as familiar. George Matheson, a gifted scholar, with a brilliant career before him, finds himself suddenly deprived of sight. The black curtain falls instantaneously between himself and all the bright prospect which life unfolded to him. His marriage is broken off, the pulpit seems closed to him, his career appears ended. It appears ended, but it is not, because he will not have it

so. He will not allow the mind to stagnate because the eye no longer serves the brain; he goes on with his tasks of scholarship, becomes a great preacher, writes many books, never daunted by difficulties, never asking pity for his disabilities. In that moment of terrible distress, when the darkness first fell on him, he wrote a hymn:

O Light that followest all my way,
I yield my flickering torch to Thee;
My heart restores its borrowed ray,
That in Thy sunshine's blaze its day
May brighter, fairer be.

O Joy that seekest me through pain,
I cannot close my heart to Thee;
I trace the rainbow through the rain,
And feel the promise is not vain
That morn shall tearless be.

The hymn has become immortal. It takes rank with Newman's *Lead Kindly Light*, as among the greatest hymns of the nineteenth century. It is notable for its beauty, its freshness, its devotional appeal; it is even more conspicuous as a hymn of courage.

When we reflect upon instances like these,

the pagan notion of Fortune, of good and ill-luck, seems totally inadequate as an explication of sudden tragedy. There is surely something more than Chance here; there is at least a strong presumption of a wise, far-seeing, patient purpose. If we can discern such a purpose in conspicuous lives, it is not a rash deduction that the same purpose may be at work in humble lives. There is, indeed, nothing more wonderful than what may be called the fundamental heroism of human nature. We happen to know the heroism of Lamb, of Drummond, of Matheson; but any parish visitor, any social settlement worker, could match such stories and possibly overpass them from the knowledge of life which they have gained among the lowly. The maimed or blinded workman takes to weaving baskets or fishing-nets for a living, and sings at his work; the cultured woman, suddenly deposed from social rank and affluence, earns her bread by skilled needlework, and keeps a cheerful countenance; the crippled, the bedridden, the pensioners of charity, often manifest a more grateful and sweet temper than those who appear

immune from misfortune. One of the happiest women I have known was hopelessly crippled by rheumatism, always in pain, and for many years unable to move without assistance. To enter her room was a mental sun bath. No one ever saw her depressed, no one ever heard her complain. Her sick-room had the glory of the Shekinah in it. No one ever left it who did not tread with a firmer step and meet difficulty with a more buoyant spirit for having heard her voice, and there are many who owe their souls to her.

Some stress should be laid upon a point already raised, viz., that the quality of suddenness in tragedy may be in itself rather an advantage than a disadvantage. Forewarned is forearmed, we say; but forearmed is also to be disarmed. The anticipation of misfortune may prove a greater misfortune than the misfortune itself. Palmists, crystal-gazers, mind-readers, and other quacks who pretend to disclose the future, base their commendation to our credulity upon the supposed fact that it is a good thing for us to know what awaits us, in

order that we may be the better prepared for it. On the contrary, even if such knowledge were possible, the wise man would reject it, as a source of weakness rather than of strength. Job would scarcely have thought it worth the while to build up for himself great wealth in flocks and herds, and to beget sons and daughters, had he foreseen the day when he would have been deprived of them all; and thus he would have lost the zest of living which made him a happy man for so many prosperous years. Where all is uncertain we snatch a certain breathless joy from the hazard; were our predated defeat revealed to us we should have no spirit of adventure left in us. And, after all, it is the spirit of adventure that makes life the interesting business that it is. Each day is a march into the unknown, and hence the eagerness with which we greet it. It is surely a wise kindness that conceals from us equally the defeats and the rewards of life. If to-morrow brings the fatal ambush, we shall be none the worse able to encounter it, because to-night the stars shine clear for us, and we

sleep soundly in the comfortable faith that they rain on us benign and happy influences.

✓ The way in which a man meets the minor troubles of life is an indication of how he will meet the major, if these should befall him. The best training for supreme battles is in the long discipline of uncelebrated campaigns; Waterloo had not been won but for the sublime patience of Wellington in the lines of Torres Vedras. Men can no more leap into sudden heroism than into sudden scholarship; heroism is the scholarship of the soul, only mastered by a thousand difficult lessons. If a man is fretful, peevish, inconstant, despondent, cowardly under the small rebuffs of life, it is very unlikely that he will act heroically in the great contests. "If," says the Hebrew poet, "thou hast run with the footmen and they have wearied thee, then how canst thou contend with horses? If in the land of peace, wherein thou trustedst, they wearied thee, then how wilt thou do in the swelling of Jordan?" To that question there can be no hopeful answer. We do, no doubt, sometimes see sudden tragedy developing in men unsus-

pected qualities, but that is because the qualities were latent. If the dandy of the ballroom sometimes becomes the hero of the battle field, it is because he was always more than a dandy; under his dandyism there was a man. So, when we find great emergencies calling forth significant qualities in natures we have deemed insignificant, we may be pretty sure that we have misread these natures. Men may not act heroically until the heroic moment tests them. If they do rise triumphant under such a test, it is because unknown to us, and perhaps unconsciously to themselves, they have nourished in their hearts the embryo of heroism.

It were wise in us not to expect too much from life; and this counsel springs not from cynicism but experience. A vast deal of quite gratuitous bitterness and disappointment happens to most of us entirely because we misread the nature of life at the start. In the heat of youth our whole mind is set not on obligations but rewards, not on duties but on pleasures. Life is not usually ungenerous in the matter of pleasures and rewards, but like a good school-

master, life puts duties and obligations first. Upon the whole it is a hard business to live. The half of a long life is not ill-spent in mastering the common elements of living, if the latter half should attain to mere decency of feeling, ordinary virtue, the daily practice of fortitude and hope. We have no right to expect from life what ordinary men and women have not found in it. If for them life was no joyous picnic under rainbowed skies, we may be sure we are not likely to fare better; and the sooner we make up our minds to the fact that life is discipline, the better for us.

In the immense story of suffering and struggling generations, there is something that should rebuke our egoism, and do much to lessen the dimensions of our own personal tragedies. Against the background of the infinite all finite sorrows appear infinitesimal. In Stevenson's *Wrecker*, Mr. Loudon Dodd, fresh from a disastrous voyage, finds himself introduced to the solitude of the hills that rise round Honolulu, and makes his reflections thus: "Not Chaldea appeared more ancient, nor the Pyramids of

Egypt more abstruse: and I heard time measured by 'the drums and tramlings' of immemorial conquests, and saw myself the creature of an hour. Over the bankruptcy of Pinkerton and Dodd, of Montana Block, S. F., and the conscientious troubles of the junior partner, the spirit of eternity was seen to smile."

Mr. Loudon Dodd did but reiterate the saying of a great historic personage—"One glimpse of Eternity makes everything else look trivial." He who can gaze but for an instant into that vast perspective, will feel not only that he himself is the creature of an hour, but that all his troubles are equally transient and insubstantial.

VII.

On Ill-Health

THE TENANT.

Bare stands the House—bald, stark and bare,
A dwelling, not a Home;
Its empty windows gaze upon
A windy road of stars, whereon
The Tenant-Guest shall come.

One doorway bears the name of Birth;
The Tenant comes, and tries
The easy latch, goes in, and brings
A music in his moving wings,
A fragrance of the skies.

He cleanses, decorates, transforms,
An ancient Artist he:
The windows gleam afar for fame,
For on each hearth he lights the flame
Of immortality.

One doorway bears the name of Death—
It fronts the setting sun—
Through which the Tenant passes hence,
Robed in a dreadful consequence,
When all his work is done.

The mystic Tenant works his will,
He works because he must,
Served by his slaves of Days and Nights,
Until, when finished his delights,
The House falls into dust.

I scarcely knew the Tenant once,
I passed him with a nod;
The day the house fell he drew near,
He stooped and whispered in my ear
His name—lo, it was God!

VII.

ON ILL-HEALTH

IT is a common saying that health is one of those possessions that is not valued till it is lost. Like sunshine, fresh air, water, sleep, it seems less a boon bestowed than a natural heritage. We assume that it is ours beyond all threat of dispossession, and this in spite of a hundred instances to the contrary. Few men, in estimating the manifold perils and chances of life, trouble themselves over the possibility of ill-health. They will insure themselves against fire, accident, burglary, various forms of commercial mischance or loss, but the loss of health seems too remote a peril to engage their prudence. As long as the machinery of the body runs sweetly it is impossible to imagine it unequal to any strain that we may choose to put upon it. It is even a matter of pride to the strong man to use his strength to the utmost. To dole it out like a miser would afflict him with a sense of meanness, and to use it with precaution would appear an act of cowardice.

THE BOOK OF COURAGE

A good many years ago, when I was young, I met a man who had won every honor which his university could bestow upon him, and, with the last laurel on his brow, he had come home apparently to die. He lay for days together in the summer weather under the shade of a great oak upon a grassy lawn, gazing vacantly upon the bright world, dull, silent, preoccupied with sad and dreary meditations. The machinery of life had broken down; at some obscure point in the dim workshop of the body a valve had failed to act, a tiny thread of nerve had withered, and in the once-thronged chambers of the brain consternation reigned. It was an affecting spectacle; I found it also menacing, for it set one thinking of the insecure tenure on which we hold our hopes, and the frailty of that foundation on which all human glory and ambition rest. A grain of sand in a man's flesh, Pascal remarks, has changed the course of Empires. Mighty conquests have been undone by some brief errancy in the body of the conqueror, and great dynasties have been overthrown by no larger cause than the deterioration of a brain-cell. A

sudden failure of nervous energy in a critical moment lost Waterloo to Napoleon, and it is probable that the literal "grain of sand" of which Pascal spoke, settled the fortunes of the third bearer of his name even more effectually than German arms. The man who, in old age, stands eminent above all contemporaries, owes his triumph not alone to genius but to physical efficiency; Goethe, without his superb health had never attained the captaincy of the European mind; and many besides him, if they had died young, had died unknown.

This, however, is but one side of the case; there is another that shows us how man, by sheer force of will, may make the body serve him, and may compel frail or damaged physical machinery to accomplish great purposes. The modern theory of personality represents the body as a kind of house into which there is introduced a spiritual tenant, commonly known as the Soul. The soul is not so much born with the body as injected into it. It possesses the body, but is no more of the substance of the body than I am of the substance of the bricks,

mortar, marble, glass or woodwork that combine to give me shelter. This tenant proceeds to light a divine fire upon the empty hearths; to decorate the brain chambers with the enduring artistry of thought; to subdue the whole to its convenience; even, one may imagine, to exercise its will upon perishable material, as the tenant of a house may raise the ceiling of this room, or push out a window in another, extending, heightening, transforming the whole to new uses, and wider ones. This is not only a noble theory, but it is a patent fact. Let me call the mysterious tenant by what name I will, yet I am conscious of some presence in me that transcends the body and uses it only as a convenient apparatus. I am represented to the casual observer by my body, and, as like as not, misrepresented. To the more searching glance I am what the tenant of my body is. The body is, in reality, no more than a means to an end, just as printing is not thought, but the means of thought. What is more natural than that this personality or soul of mine should be able to

impose its will upon the body, and even to overrule its frailties and infirmities?

Nothing in the long story of human endeavor is more wonderful than the complete conquest of physical inadequacy made by great spirits. It seems probable that Alexander, Cæsar and Napoleon—each a world-conqueror, and the second the greatest name in history next to Jesus—were what we should now call epileptics. William of Orange was racked by asthma, and Wolfe, the heroic conqueror of Quebec, was of a frail and ailing constitution. Erasmus was tortured with the stone, Richard Baxter never knew a day of perfect health, and Heine lay for years on what he called his “mattress-grave” in Paris, half-blind and paralyzed, but unsubdued in mind. If we are to count disabilities we may remember that Beethoven was stone deaf, that Parkman, the most picturesque of American historians, could only read for an hour a day; while in our own time the telephone is perfected by a man whose ears are closed to the transmission of sound, and victorious racing yachts are designed by a man who never saw his own plans. Here

is the restless tenant of the body, visibly at work—visibly and mightily. Deafness, blindness, sickness—the senses most necessary to life ruined or reduced to mere sentient shreds—all these daunting deprivations, all these defections and betrayals of the body—behold them overcome, treated as though they were not, under the command of the firm and dauntless spirit.

It is the spirit of such lives as these that Browning has so finely expressed in his *Grammarian's Funeral*. Browning was perhaps thinking of Erasmus when he pictured his great scholar racked with calculus, or of Heine when he described him as “dead from the waist down.” The body is wholly ruined, but among the ruins dwells an indomitable tenant, who, from the yet unfallen belfry of the mind, rings out challenge and defiance. Those who do not understand him advise capitulation:

“Others mistrust and say, ‘but time escapes,
 Live now or never!’
 He said, ‘What’s time? Leave Now for dogs and
 apes,
 Man has forever!’”

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ON ILL-HEALTH

“So, with the throttling hands of death at strife,
Ground he at grammar;
So, thro’ the rattle, parts of speech were rife,
While he could stammer.”

The main lesson that Browning would teach is that “this high man, with a great thing to pursue, dies ere he knows it.” He also teaches by implication the supremacy of mind over matter, the power of the valiant spirit to economize the scantiest physical means for the loftiest intellectual ends.

Edgar Allan Poe has made the text of one of his stories a philosophic axiom, that “Man dieth not wholly, save by the death of his will.” The powers of the will have never been defined; they are indeed little understood by the wisest; but there can be no doubt that the will to live has often more to do with living than the physical means. There are passages of life very like certain passages in Alpine climbing; the precipice is so difficult, the peril so menacing and our own exhaustion so great, that nothing can pull us through but nerve. Should our nerve fail us, or in other words, our will to survive, the

body at once becomes a shrieking mass of impotence, a thing doomed to demolition. Do we not often say of a man that he is living on his nerve? And what does the saying mean, but this: that the mere will to live has supplied the strength to live; that when the natural fuel of life fails, the man feeds the fire with his own spirit, and makes this spiritual energy do the work which the body has refused? Every doctor knows that his best ally is his patient's "will to live"; if he can but enlist that upon his side, the dark corner may be turned; if he cannot, the best medicine is of no avail. It would often seem as though death himself respected the obdurately hopeful man, the valiant fighter. Death makes short work of cowards; but when he meets one who challenges every inch with him, and perhaps makes a jest of the whole tragic business, he will sometimes call off his archers as a compliment to the courage of his victim.

Should physical infirmity overcome us then in mid-life, or earlier, as happens to so many, the best thing we can do is simply to go on living as though nothing has happened, as nearly as

may be possible. There is no juggling with facts, of course; but we can do a great deal to render them inoperative by not thinking too much about them. It is a question of whether we are to limp through life as valetudinarians, engaged in the morbid study of our own maladies; or still affect a firm step, and go on fighting our battles as William of Orange fought his battle of the Boyne, with a stoic Dutch courage, that ignored physical infirmities in pursuit of high ends. We are told that on that memorable day William was fifteen hours in the saddle—not a bad record for a man emaciated by asthma, and we may be sure that his asthma was not the worse but the better for it. It may be that we have but little left us out of our fortune of health which once seemed inexhaustible, but we can make the little go a long way if we will, just as a good cook can perform the most surprising miracles out of odds and ends. We may even find a new exhilaration in the game of hide-and-seek we play with Death; every hour put to use swells our score, and there is the sweetness of triumph in it. Who knows whether, after

all, we may not win our point? It is worth trying for, at all events. If we have to die, we may as well die working as idling. We shall be none the worse for it, and conceivably the world may be the better. "By all means, begin your folio," writes Stevenson; "even if the doctor does not give you a year, even if he hesitates about a month, make one brave push, and see what may be accomplished in a week." Doctors are not always infallible nor does the progress of disease always coincide with their predictions. But even if their diagnosis be admitted, there is one thing concerning which the wisest knows little, and that is the indefinite, indeterminable but real power which the will may exercise upon the body in the arrest of the process of decay.

Stevenson himself is a conspicuous example of what may be accomplished by a valiant spirit, in a war against physical infirmities which might have dismayed the bravest. In a letter to George Meredith he says, "For fourteen years I have not had a day's real health. I have written in bed and written out of it; written in hæmorrhages, written in sickness, written torn by

coughing, written when my head swam for weakness. The battle goes on—ill or well is a trifle—so it goes. I was made for contest, and the powers have willed that my battlefield should be this dingy inglorious one of the bed and the physic-bottle.” It is characteristic of Stevenson that he insists on the fullest mental life when his physical life hangs by a thread. He bates no jot of heart or hope, and no pang of labor in pursuit of his career. He takes a month to write two of his chapters on the South Seas; twenty-one days for twenty-four pages of the *Ebb-Tide*; four days for his brief preface to *An Inland Voyage*. He writes his *Prince Otto* seven times, and he destroys the first draft of *Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde*, because his wife had discovered a flaw in it, and he feared to keep the manuscript, lest he should be tempted to fall back on it. When his right hand is disabled he learns to write with his left. When he is forbidden to speak, he dictates whole chapters by means of the deaf-and-dumb alphabet. Was ever work so fine and so enduring done under conditions so disastrous? Yet he makes no com-

plaint of life, asks for no pusillanimous concessions, confronts his difficulties with a gay courage, and in the end professes that he has had a good time, regrets very little, and would alter nothing.

The gallant temper of the man has perhaps done as much to win him fame as the exquisite felicities of his work. It was by means of the same gallant temper that he lived so long. He refused invalidism with a fine scorn, jested at weakness, kept his spirits high. Maimed soldier as he is, he can make better marching than the strong, and can fly his colors longer. "If I could only secure a violent death, what a fine success!" he writes. He braces his will for a supreme effort, flees across seas and continents, and finds his life renewed in contact with primitive nature. "I wish to die in my boots," he declares; "no more Land of Counterpane for me. To be drowned, to be shot, to be thrown from a horse—ay, to be hanged, rather than pass again through that slow dissolution." This is the spirit of adventure, and as long as we can maintain this spirit, life, however burdened by

disabilities, will remain interesting to us. A gallant temper and a cheerful spirit will serve us, in the long run, better than a good many virtues that usually pass at a much higher face value.

When we fall sick a good many excellent people will seize the occasion to preach to us the virtue of resignation, but this precisely the one virtue we have most need to fear. The world has got little good out of resignation, and so much harm that it appears to be a vice rather than a virtue. Why should we be resigned? We do not respect kings who abdicate at the first shot of rebellious guns, and resignation is merely abdication under the compulsion of fear. In the days when men believed that every physical ill was the direct touch of God's finger upon sinful flesh, there was something to be said for resignation, for it wore the mask of piety. But those days are long past, and we have both a better opinion of God and a more intelligent comprehension of cause and effect. Cholera and typhoid are no longer reckoned divine visitations; they are the products of human folly and

foulness. They can be prevented, and the man who does not fight against them is a friend not of God, but of the devil. God expects such a fight from us, and equally God expects us to make the best fight we can against the enemies of our own well-being. It is time enough to strike our flag when there is not a shot left in our locker; and even then, like the old sea-dogs, whose immortal exploits are blazoned in history, we should prefer to go down fighting. "I have still my boots left," said Robert Blake, famishing behind the barricades of Taunton, "and as long as I have that most excellent meal left, I will not surrender." Blake did not surrender, and he lived to wear out a good many pair of boots. Many a man has in the same way beaten his physical foes by the grace of an unconquerable courage. This is distinctly a case in which it is wise to resist the devil; there is always a good chance that he may flee from us.

Next to the vice of resignation is the vice of idleness. The same excellent people who counsel us to be resigned are apt to urge us to be idle. Piety is sponsor for the one vice and affec-

tion for the other. "Don't go to business to-day—don't try your strength over this endless writing—let things go, and rest"—such are the counsels which affection gives to the man whose health is failing. Doctors are often great adepts in the same line of argument. They insist that their patients shall exchange a full and active life for a life in solitary places, where they have fresh air and sunlight indeed, but no vital interests, no employment. The prescription usually works badly, except with those whose battle is virtually done; for a man who is robbed of vital interest in life is not likely to make a strong effort to live. I once heard it said of a man who, after living a very busy life, had lived in idleness, that he died "from lack of nervous excitement!" No doubt there are persons who die from having too much to do, but there is a yet larger class who die from not having enough. The worst of idleness is that we soon become parasitic. Like the parasite of the woodland, we glue ourselves to the strength of others, and cease to draw strength from our own roots. There can be no form of existence

less creditable, and it should be resisted as long as we have a spark of valor in us. Let the sick man, not wholly incapacitated, go on with his work as long as he can; ten chances to one his malady will make less progress while he works than while he idles. The great Bede, who may be regarded as the founder of English literature, worked even on his deathbed, and to his last hour. He could not die till the last sentence of his translation into English of St. John's Gospel was written; having written that, as the darkness of evening fell upon the page, he sang, "Glory to God," and composed himself to die. The busy man has no time to die; the idle man has no motive to live.

There are, however, forms of ill-health which leave us little option as to what we may or may not do. They put a peremptory stop to our accustomed habits and activities. Well, even then, there are some consolations left. It may not be an altogether bad thing for a man who has passed his years amid the clamor of various and public activities, if, before he leave the stage forever, he shall have a little time for the

more private and sacred matters of existence. There are old arrears of love to be discharged, debts of postponed affection to be liquidated, a whole world of claims, belonging to that which is most sacred in his own nature and in the hearts of those who love him, which should challenge his attention. He will have time now to become acquainted with his family, to renew old tendernesses, to recover something of the first freshness of his marriage love. There are sealed sanctuaries in his heart, the key of which has been long mislaid, which he will do well to reopen; shrines of early faith and piety long forgotten which he may revisit. There are perhaps also some of the finer tastes indigenous in his nature, but attenuated with long misuse, which may be recovered. Let him so order these hours of twilight before the sun sets, that they shall be purely beautiful. Let him be thankful life has given him so much, and be quicker to remember gifts bestowed than gifts denied. Let him attune his spirit to a high cheerfulness, rise above peevishness and irritability, speak hopefully, cultivate the art of being easily amused,

T H E B O O K O F C O U R A G E

forget not how to laugh, and turn a bright face upon his children, his nurses, and his visitors. There is abundant room for courage here. There is a stage large enough for the most heroic drama. It will be much for those who later on will mourn him, if the last act of the drama has left a beautiful picture on the memory; if they shall be able to say of him, as was said of Charles the First:

He nothing common did nor mean
Upon that memorable scene.

VIII.

On Bereavement

THE ORCHESTRA.

In rolling drums I heard earth's moans
Her tears in muted strings,
And thro' the shouting trumpets cried
The pain of mortal things.

The violin breathed man's despair,
The trombone, like a brute,
Laughed hoarsely, and indignant love
Protested in the flute.

The awful music wailed and wailed,
Like winds around a tomb:
From high-swung censers angels poured
A dropping cloud of gloom.

The curtain rose, the lights flared up,
A Voice soared like a bird;
So true it sang, so sweet, so high,
My heart was inly stirred.

And now the drums in triumph rolled,
No single drum was mute,
And Joy laughed thro' the violins
And Love sang in the flute.

'Twas Immortality who sang
And bade the world rejoice:
Lo, all the great orchestra knew
And waited for her voice.

She took earth's discords in her hands,
God's prima donna, she:
She wove them into rushing stars
Of light and harmony.

She drew the boughs of Heaven down
And plucked immortal fruit;
And God spoke thro' the violins,
And Jesus thro' the flute.

VIII.

ON BEREAVEMENT

I [T] is of the nature of life that we cannot pass along its roads without losing our comrades and companions as we go. We start gaily, as caravans start on their desert journey, admirably equipped, compact, with a cheerful sense of entire security ; but we have not gone far before one and another fall from the ranks, and are left behind. Not Napoleon's backward march from Moscow, nor Dr. Brydon's sole return through the Khyber Pass—"the remnant of an army"—has more of tragedy in it than an ordinary human life, with its record of bright faces and familiar forms, once so dear and animated, now lost forever, and left behind in that great solitude we call the Past. The child assumes that the parental lives will outlast his own ; it seems a thing inconceivable and an inversion of all natural order, that his strength which is so slight should survive theirs which is so firm and valiant. In the same way we assume the perpetual lives of brothers, sisters,

kinsfolk and friends, nor does all the experience of the past destroy our fond credulity. With a fine, if pathetic, optimism, we train ourselves in the belief that the sorrows which happen to others will leave us immune; and it is hard to see how life could go on at all, or how we should find fortitude to live in a world where Death is the one immortal monarch, if we did not deliberately deceive ourselves with this fiction of immunity.

There is probably no fact of existence of which we are less acutely aware than this immense sway of Death, and it is well for us that we can achieve this attitude of mind. We know it, of course; but we are not aware of it, or act as though we were not. If we were, or if even we could attain a momentary vivid vision of it, our courage to live would be quite gone. Think of what such a vision would include: how many empires and dynasties fallen into undecipherable dust; Babylon and Nineveh with all their multitudes of men erased, Xerxes weeping for his lost army of five millions, Napoleon at Beresina watching the destruction of a host of

ON BEREAVEMENT

warriors; plagues, pestilence, fires and earthquakes which have left great cities desolate as Tadmor in the wilderness; Armadas sunk with all their shouting crews; islands, fair as Eden, depopulated in a day by a single breath of sickness; the earth itself built of dead forests, once lifting continents of living green to a genial sun; the very heavens strewn with the wreck of worlds, the graveyard of perished constellations, the cemetery of a thousand suns. Amid this cosmic Armageddon, how frail appears the individual life! By what combination of a thousand chances can it survive, even for a day! And should it survive, how futile must appear its tiny span, its active worth, in this vortex of ineluctable decay, this fierce whirling Maelstrom that drags down into nothingness stars and suns, continents and empires!

Yet life does go on, and each individual man proceeds to build up the edifice of his existence undeterred by the threat of death. With a kind of sublime inconsistency, knowing that his life is not worth a moment's purchase, he acts as though it were eternal. And yet there is a cer-

tain principle in his inconsistency; what is it, but his own need to live? Whether he shall be here for a long or brief period, that need remains. He must assert himself, he must justify himself, and he can only do so by ignoring death. To do so, he must maintain the illusion of his own immunity. He must learn to read of epidemics, fires, earthquakes, wrecks, as things foreign to himself, disasters which by no chance can be his portion. Should this fine valiant credulity fail him, there is always philosophy to fall back upon. He can act in the temper of the cheerful pulpiteer who, having stated all kinds of obstacles to his creed, remarked, "And now, having looked these difficulties in the face, let us pass on." Or, if he be of graver mood, he can perhaps learn to say with a forgotten poet, Lovell Beddoes,

Death is the one condition of our life;
To murmur were unjust; our buried sires
Yielded their seats to us, and we shall give
Our elbow-room of sunshine to our sons.
From first to last the traffic must go on;
Still birth for death. Shall we remonstrate then?
Millions have died that we might breathe this day;
The first of all might murmur, but not we.

ON BEREAVEMENT

It is in this spirit that we should learn to meet bereavement; and, as a matter of fact, this is the spirit in which we do act. Who does not recall the first great bereavement of life, and the poignant feelings it evoked? How irreparable it seemed! We were boys or youths at the beginning of our powers; we had always dwelt in the security of a home, where a father's strength and a mother's wisdom had seemed inalienable possessions; and then, sudden as an eclipse, they vanished. The anchorage of life was gone, and we felt ourselves adrift. The prizes of life, for which we were prepared to struggle, now seemed of no value, since we had lost those wise and kind counsellors at whose feet we would have laid them. The very flavor of life was lost to us, and we imagined ourselves going softly all our days in an abandonment of grief. Henceforth we would be recluses, dwellers in the places of shadow; never would it be "bright confident morning again." Such were our emotions, and they were sincere—so sincere that though many years have passed, and we ourselves are now

parents, yet there are still times when "the old wound aches and cries."

But we did not maintain that attitude simply because we could not. The very order of the world forbade it. Our own need to live prevailed. Life bade us forward, as an army must needs march, whoever falls upon the field. The acuteness of our agony did not wholly die, for it remains with us still, softened into a sacred tenderness of memory and regret. But by some subtle alchemy the complexion of our grief was changed, the blood began to move more freely in our veins, our being was renewed. For, when all is said and done, this need to live is the strongest instinct of humanity; it survives sickness, poverty, misfortune and bereavement; it challenges even Death himself, and mocks him in the moment of his triumph with the proud boast of immortality. Of all instincts, this is the divinest, for without it the continuance of the human race could not survive for three generations.

To the mourner, in the first anguish of his sorrow, these considerations will seem of small

ON BEREAVEMENT

value; and, indeed, it is hard to offer any kind of counsel that will not sound callous and impertinent. It will seem to him sacrilegious to turn his eyes from the past to the future, to do anything that would minimize his grief, or make it more bearable by making it more remote. Nevertheless, Nature works toward this end, silently, if to us unconsciously. When the body is wounded, Nature flings all her reserve forces into the breach, toiling steadily to repair the injury, and the same process happens to the mind. A permanent grief is as unnatural as a permanent wound. We think that we shall never smile again, nor eat our bread with gladness, nor go about our daily tasks with interest; but Nature proves stronger than our will. Life is composed of hundreds of practical acts, and whether we will or not, these acts must be accomplished. We eat and are nourished by our food; we sleep and wake refreshed; we breathe the wholesome freshness of the spring air and are revitalized. The fragrance of the woods and flowers thrills us, as of yore; the salt odor of the sea, the cool lustration of the wind, the

cheerful challenge of the sun. The days also bring their familiar tasks; the meal that must be cooked, the room that must be swept, the wage that must be earned, the various business of life, all so commonplace, and yet so urgent and so necessary. Before we know it, this ordinary business of existence is absorbing us. We are going hither and thither, taking our part in the world's affairs, meeting friends and perhaps resisting enemies; and are surprised to find that our lips have not lost their old trick of smiling, nor our eyes their old interest in things of grace and beauty. We are, perhaps, secretly ashamed of what we think our shallowness; it almost hurts our self-respect to find that we are not crushed by a grief that seemed irremediable and final. The blame is not deserved; we are simply obeying Nature's law, and responding to her ancient remedies, in which a hundred generations have found healing and relief. Nature, that follows night with dawn, tempest with fair weather, the havoc of spring storms with autumn's harvests, is simply insisting that we, too, should turn our gloomy faces to the

ON BEREAVEMENT

light, and accept her law of renovation and renewal.

In this work of renewal, Nature expects our active co-operation, though she is perfectly prepared to work without it. We read of David, that when the child of his illicit passion lay sick he wept and fasted; but when the child was dead he anointed himself, and changed his apparel, and returned immediately to the duties of his daily life. "Can I bring him back again?" he remarked to his reproachful servants; "I shall go to him, but he will not return to me." The words are full of pathos, and were spoken in bitterness of heart; the lamentation of the ages breathes in them. But they also possess the serenity of wisdom, though it is a sad wisdom. The man who, through seven days and nights had wept and fasted for a dying infant, and whose grief had reached so perilous a height that his servants feared to tell him that the child was dead, could not have uttered these words callously. If he could have bought back the child's life with his own, doubtless he would have done so, for this was the same man, who, later on,

wished that he could have died for the beautiful and rebellious Absalom. But David recognized the call of life in the same instant that he realized the finality of death. He turned his face resolutely toward life. Tragic sorrow had not absolved him from the duties of kingship. In the same spirit Sir Walter Scott, after his wife's funeral, sleeps in the room where she died; it is his dumb, heroic way of saying that he must needs go on living as before, though henceforth he lives alone. Was not this attitude right? Did it not express a healthy instinct? Grief remains, but the strong man resents the tyranny of grief; nor is the grief less holy or less poignant because he is more eager to work while it is called to-day than to let his life drain itself away in morbid lassitude of will and purpose.

If we can imagine those who have left us advising us as to how we should regard them, we may be very sure that the last thing they would desire in us would be a grief so inordinate that it unfitted us for the task of daily living. Those whose one desire while they lived was to make

ON BEREAVEMENT

us happy, would still wish us to be happy. Those whose delicate sweetness once filled our lives with heavenly perfume, would not desire that we should dwell among the acrid odors of the tomb. Those who never caused us tears when they were with us, would not demand inordinate weeping from us because they have gone away. Could the mother still rule the actions of the child, or the wife impose her soft control upon the husband's will, would not each say, "Be as happy as you can, live cheerfully, do each day's work uncomplainingly; for, if in other worlds some vision of this world remains, I shall be the happier for your happiness, and the sadder for your grief." The finest tribute to the dead is not to break our hearts for them, but to use our heart's strength in better living, that when we meet again they may approve us. Lightly to forget the dead were to dishonor them; but to make our lives sterile of hope and joy, barren of high intentions and good deeds because of them, were a still worse dishonor. Perchance the reason why they cannot visit us is that we have imposed too thick a cloud of

grief between ourselves and them; were the atmosphere lighter, brighter, sunnier, they who have now passed into the land of light might the readier find us, and make us conscious of their dear, immortal presences. Who knows but that the one hindrance to perfect fellowship with the departed is our own sadness of spirit; may not this be the sole barrier which these, from whose eyes all tears are wiped away, cannot cross?

In our attitude to bereavement very much depends on how we really think of the departed. There is so much of awe and terror in death that it is not surprising we should seek to purge the memory of many painful recollections. But many persons go further, and in a kind of superstitious frenzy seek to impose oblivion on the dead themselves. It is not alone the defeatment of sickness, the silent havoc of disease, the spectacle of the ruined tabernacle of the body which they would forget; but when all is over the portrait is taken from the album, the books once used, the dresses once worn, are put away, the music is taken from the rack, and the

whole house is swept and garnished. It is part of this foolish etiquette of grief that the very name is never mentioned. But this attitude is surely as unkind as it is uncourageous. If it be a pain to see and touch objects once used by gentle hands we loved, it is a pain akin to joy; we seem to be still touching the hands themselves, and feel their living warmth, when we hold the things they used. But what more dreadful than the rooms swept clean of all memorials? Here pain alone dwells, emphasized and intensified by the cold bareness, the dreary emptiness. In this banishing of the dead from our sight, we are really gratifying our own selfishness, which dreads anything that may revive sensations that are painful. Nor do we succeed even in this; for the garnished room, by force of contrast, makes the scenes it once witnessed the more vivid and intolerable; and the name, never mentioned, is remembered with the greatest bitterness.

The wiser way is to think and act as though the dead were still with us—not as we saw them in a few brief days or weeks of sickness, but as

we knew them in their amplitude of life, in their bright eminence of health and joy, before the shadow fell upon them. Sir Walter Scott writes in his diary after his wife's death: "We speak freely of her whom we have lost, and mix her name in our ordinary conversation. This is the rule of nature. All primitive people speak of their dead and I think virtuously and wisely." He then goes on to say that the "idea of blotting the names of those who have gone, out of the language and familiar discourse of those to whom they were dearest" is a selfish and morbid habit; and he recalls how the "Highlanders speak of their dead children as freely as of their living members; how poor Colin or Robert would have acted in such and such a situation." This surely is the voice, not alone of courage, but of wisdom. Poor Colin or Robert will not seem so far away if we can still talk of them; it is only in our dreary silences we remember they are silent. Let the chair still be at the table, as it was before they went; let the books once beloved be open on the desk, the favorite flowers be on the mantel; who knows that they do not

ON BEREAVEMENT

come unseen, and take their familiar places with us, and turn signalling eyes to ours, full of the old dear regard, though between us and them a veil has dropped? Let them at least be welcomed; let them know that whatever change they may have suffered into something "rich and strange," love in us burns with an unalterable flame, as we humbly trust it does in them.

Perhaps the wisest thought of all is that which recognizes life as carrying its own limits in itself, and death as therefore neither a cruel intrusion nor a blind impertinence. It is not difficult to attain this point of view when we witness the death of the aged. They have had their day—a full and long day—the evening lies still and bright about them, and they, like setting suns, hang for a moment in translucent air, majestic and full-orbed, and disappear amid such solemn and serene splendors that it is less a parting than a pageant. For those who die full of years and honors dirges are inappropriate; they should be saluted, not with tolling bells, but with the voice of trumpets. With

those who die in youth or early manhood, the case is very different. Here we have the working of the law of waste, the unfulfilled intention, the wreck of a precious argosy whose voyage had scarce begun. Harder still appears the death of children. They have so much to hope from life; their expectations run so high; they are so frail, so innocent, so gay, that their death appears an outrage, so cruel and wanton that it seems unpardonable. In them we have invested the treasure of our own youth, and when they die our own youth dies with them. Yet, natural as these accusations are, there are holier thoughts that visit us as the tumult of our agony subsides. Had they grown to men and women, their childhood might have perished; but now their childhood is immortal. For us they will remain as we always knew them, bright incarnations of loveliness and joy, and he who has lost a child is never childless. It is he alone who truly has a child; should he grow never so old his child will run and laugh beside him on the darkening road, in immortal innocence and gayety; for, to his thoughts, the child

who has passed from him remains a child forever. Life, that despoils us of so much, cannot rob us of our dead: their beauty and their grace are fixed in fadeless colors; and Time which, had they lived, might have changed their features and their dispositions, can now alter nothing in them which we found desirable and lovely.

It is true enough, as gloomy philosophers are eager to remind us, that we did not ask to live; but, nevertheless, in the very act of living, we have tacitly agreed to the conditions of our life. Among those conditions is the brevity of life itself, touching disastrously those we love and at last ourselves. The courageous spirit will not seek to alter conditions that are inevitable, but will learn to transcend them. And we do, not in seeming, but in truth, transcend this tragic brevity of life, when we live as though we were immortal. Living thus for purposes that need for their perfection not a single life but many lives, we do at last realize a spiritual if not a physical immunity from death; and we learn to think habitually of those who have left

T H E B O O K O F C O U R A G E

us as still moving forward on a high and unseen road, in the completeness and efficiency of a personality which for them and for us is indestructible in essence and unlimited in evolution.

IX.

**On Leaving Familiar
Things**

THE EXILE.

The old home, the far home, the house where I was
born,

The green road, the high road, beside the blossoming
thorn,

The brook against the garden gate that sang the
whole night thro',

The dog that ran to meet me in the pastures bright
with dew,

O, I'm weary for the old home, the house where I
was born.

The old hands, the kind hands, that held me long ago,

The old love, the true love, whose worth I did not know,

My mother knitting socks for me beside the cot-
tage fire,

Foreseeing how my feet would seek the roads of
wide desire,

O, I'm weary for the old love that loved me long ago.

The trumpets shout against the wind, the anchor's up
at last,

The water laps along the keel, the pennon's at the
mast;

Hurrah! for galleons deep with gold, for Spain
and Mexico,

For Lima, Cruz, and Labrador—perchance the Arc-
tic floe,

But I'm weary for the long voyage that brings me
home at last.

If Heaven should be the port I make, I hope that it
will be

No golden city like a jewel set in a golden sea,

But just a cottage, warm and bright, my mother
at the gate

To kiss me as she always did, and whisper, "Child,
you're late!"

O, the old home, the far home, 'tis there that I
would be.

IX.
ON LEAVING FAMILIAR
THINGS

I AM so constituted that familiar things have for me a charm out of all proportion to their intrinsic beauty and significance, and in this disposition I am very far from solitary. A path beside a river or a lake, which we have walked in childhood, a belt of wood, which we have watched through many years in its spring-tide burgeoning and its rich autumnal death, the convolution of hills, the arrangement of a garden, a glimpse of the sea, always meeting us like a kindly eye at a given point, the peculiar staging of the sunrise or the sunset, the special qualities of winds, the thin line of the horizon always in the same place, stretched like a silver wire between twin heights—shapes, contours, perfumes, colors, symmetries—all these things affect us, and can so interpenetrate our sensations and emotions that they become in truth a portion of ourselves. It is the same in its degree with artificial ob-

jects that surround us. The house in which we have known tragic or delightful hours, the table which has witnessed many happy festivals, the bed on which we dreamed our first romance or planned our earliest triumph, even so small a thing as a bookcase by the fire, where we have stretched out our questing hand a thousand times, or a picture on the wall, or the pattern of a wall-paper, or a chair on which one who has long since passed away once sat, and smiled, and talked—these things also are for us less external objects than internal entities—as it were, the furniture of our spirits. There are finer landscapes, no doubt, and more commodious houses; we live, perhaps, to look upon the one and to dwell within the other; but they have not the sanctity of memory, and have no enduring charm. From all our wanderings we turn back to the familiar with a kind of quiet ecstasy; and there are many who love it so well that they never wish to wander, nor are tempted for a moment by the dream of larger worlds.

It is in respect of these, who will on no account resign the familiar for the unknown, that

ON LEAVING FAMILIAR THINGS

some questions of practical significance arise. Which is the real factor in their choice, love of the familiar or dread of the unknown? Is fidelity or fear the stronger motive? Are they preferring a gratification to a duty? For if, in preferring the familiar, we ignore the larger calls of life, it is obvious that duty takes a second place to pleasure. Were the world so admirably ordered that final peace and equal blessing dignified the common human lot; were there no undiscovered countries waiting for the ploughshare and the road of steel, no crusades of progress that had not reached their goal, no just causes that had not found triumphant issue, we might dwell within our "haunt of ancient peace" with a good conscience and general approval. But suppose the reverse is true—as indeed it is—how can we justify ourselves? Suppose that for the right fulfilment of ourselves expulsion from our Paradise is needed, will not our loss be more than our gain if we hide ourselves amid the flowers and blossoms of our Eden? Sweet as such a life is when it has the sanction of divine obligation, without that sanc-

tion it is a dull, belittling life, and in the end will prove not sweet but bitter. In clinging with a selfish love to the familiar, we may miss the divinely unfamiliar; the heights that end among the stars, the upper roads that give men equally with angels the august companionship of those victorious exiles, who, in leaving the familiar, found for themselves and for mankind a better country.

Goethe once asked ironically why he should want to "ramble off into eternity," while there was so much work that needed doing in the world of time? It is a yet less respectable thing to ramble off into a private Eden. The first question which a man has to settle with himself is, what is the true intention of his life? This question, once settled rightly, leaves all other questions easy: and there is but one right answer. The answer is that the intention of life is use, and he has lived the best who has raised his life to the highest efficiency of use. Coral insects add their tiny cells to the growing reef and die without vision, so far as we know, of the grass and palms that will one day make it a

ON LEAVING FAMILIAR THINGS

habitable island. Man's wisdom is to work in the same spirit, and he should work the more willingly because to him is given the vision of ultimate rewards. This immense toiling earth goes on its way, ceaselessly industrious, the theatre of multitudinous progressions; and man's life affords its nearest counterpart. It is of the smallest moment what a man gets for himself out of the cosmic struggle; it is of supreme moment that his total efficiency comes to something in the general sum of things, were it but to make two grass blades grow where but one grew before. What arithmetic shall count the innumerable hands that toiled upon a pyramid, a cathedral, a Brooklyn Bridge, a road of steel that binds East and West together? Each force in itself was insignificant enough—a pair of hands long since dust—but the result is not insignificant. In every chisel mark upon the pyramid, every bruise of hammer or of bolted rivet on the bridge, these dead folk assert their immortality. Doubtless they thought their bread hardly earned; and how many times the Egyptian—or perchance the Hebrew—slave

gazed from the steep-walled pyramid toward his green garden patch beside the Nile, with an infinite regret, and the Italian from the high-poised cantilever saw the maize fields and the olive groves of Lombardy with a spirit sick for home! Yet each knew his work was some way greater than himself, and he himself grew great in doing it. It was not bread that he was buying with his sweat, but immortality. For, in this work of his, he had leagued himself with the eternal forces which work by slow progressions to eternal ends; he, poor drudge or slave, as he might be, caught up into lasting greatness, through the greatness of the thing he wrought, and made one with the spirit of the universe, whose will he served.

“Because they have no changes,” wrote the Hebrew poet, “men forget God”; and it may be said with equal truth that they forget their brother-men, and their own best selves. There is a tendency in security to benumb the finer feelings as there is in peril or vicissitude a tendency to evoke them. Stevenson, in *The Wrecker*, has commented upon the vast possessions and

ON LEAVING FAMILIAR THINGS

small distinction of the Carthews: "Such vast means, so long a start, and such a modest standard of achievement struck in me a strong sense of the dullness of the race." He did not need to seek far for the reason; the dullness was the natural fruit of the vast means. It is no uncommon thing to find the security of wealth producing in the second and third generation persons of painfully limited intelligence, who have either lost the impulse to contribute anything to the world's life, or were born without it. Such lives are like waters unstirred by tide or current, which soon grow stagnant. It is the mountain torrent, battling its way seaward through a thousand obstacles, that has the flame of jewels on its breast, and sings high music, like a mail-clad troubadour; but the fat stream, led tamely through lush meadows by dyke and causey, has neither voice nor color. Ten to one, as lives go, the secure life will be the insignificant; the distinguished life the product of vicissitude.

Certainly it is impossible to turn to the record of any great life without perceiving how large a

part vicissitude has played in it. One need not recall the names of patriots and saviors of society, who, by the nature of their actions, challenge hostility; nor the soldier-saints of new truth, who expect crucifixion, and indeed invite it. A man cannot be a Garibaldi and sleep on beds of down, nor a Savonarola, and live beneath his own vine and fig-tree in unmenaced and inglorious tranquillity. But it would also appear that without vicissitude it is equally impossible for him to be a great writer, artist, or musician. One thinks of Johnson writing his *Rasselas* to defray the expenses of his mother's funeral, of the hardships of Goldsmith and the imprisonment of Bunyan, of Schubert, with scarcely money enough to buy the paper on which he wrote his music, and of artists, both ancient and modern, who literally hawked their pictures at the roadside or in the tavern. It is a sorry record, but who does not see that these dire misfortunes did more to provoke the flame of genius into brilliancy than to extinguish it? Would *Rasselas* have been written if Johnson's mother had not died, or Bunyan have found

ON LEAVING FAMILIAR THINGS

leisure to compose the *Pilgrim's Progress*, if he had not gone to prison? Does not the artist or musician, in the very rebound from sordid earthly conditions, scale a higher heaven of art, and become more perfectly the dedicated saint of his ideal? Reverse these conditions, and for poverty give riches, for bitter struggle leisured ease, and would the work have been so fine, or would it have done at all? Here were lives that had vicissitudes in plenty, of security and ease scarce any, yet they are among the great lives to which men award imperishable honor. They were the adventurers of the soul, torn from familiar things and sailing stormy seas; nevertheless, they won the golden isles, and taught men where they lay.

Among writers there is no supposition commoner than that all they need for the complete expression of their genius is a modest measure of security. "Give me a settled home, though it be but a cottage, and a fixed income, at least sufficient to make the narrow calculation of ways and means unnecessary, and see how my genius will flourish," is the plea. But will it?—

that is just the disputable point. The world might not be averse to the endowment of genius if it could be reassured on this point; but unfortunately the facts of history make it more than doubtful. When an eighteenth century dilettante and a modern peer alike hasten to assure us that the most fertile soil for poetry is poverty, we may be disposed to make certain ironical reflections on their own estate of ease, but we cannot help admitting that the general facts are with them. To be rooted in the familiar, to live a protected life, to be hidden from the searching wind of change—that would appear the precise environment in which the flower of genius should thrive; but at the most, all that you will find there is a creditable talent of the half-dilettante order. In such a sheltered nook you shall find a Samuel Rogers, a Monckton Milnes, at the best a Thomas Gray; but the greatest are not there. Homer, if the legendary tale be true, is a wandering minstrel; Dante cannot enter the one city that he loves; Shakespeare builds supreme tragedies in the purlieus of a London theatre; while in our own more im-

ON LEAVING FAMILIAR THINGS

mediate time, Byron, Shelley, and Keats are exiles, each beaten out of the course they planned by the wildest tempests of vicissitude. It is not Thomas Gray who sings the songs that are the lyrics of a race; these were sung by a desperately poor and most unfortunate Ayrshire peasant. Gray's fastidiously perfect verse claims our admiration; but when the Anglo-Saxon race, far-scattered through a hundred lands, would express the most sacred feelings of the heart, it is Burns who leads the orchestra; it is this great-natured, storm-battered peasant, scarce able to contrive a home to die in, who draws the thoughts of millions homeward with the immortal pathos of his *Auld Lang Syne*.

In humble, as well as great lives, the same processes are at work. There is a man known to me who thought the darkest hour of his life had come to him when he was dismissed from his employment. On the contrary, what appeared a disaster proved the making of him; for, under the spur of necessity, he sought a wider field of activity, became independent, and achieved a fortune. Every observer of life can

quote a score of similar instances; they are so common as to have become unromantic and unremarkable. We know as little of the soil that best suits our qualities as the chance seedling; it requires an ampler intelligence to transplant us to our true environment. Call it by what name we will, such an intelligence is ceaselessly at work in human lives. The man who would have lived and died unremarked in his native village, and would have asked no higher fate, is caught upon the crest of some seismic wave, and flung into the heart of a great city where he becomes its chief magistrate; or upon shores that are to him scarcely a geographical expression, where he becomes an empire builder. Faculties that would have perished in solitude are developed by the mental and moral attrition of the city; faculties, indeed, which are so deeply latent that their existence goes unsuspected, are evoked by opposition. There is no fire in the flint until it is smitten, no angel in the marble till the sharp-edged chisel puts it there. Latent powers are as good as non-existent powers; they are like the ore that lies under the ribs

ON LEAVING FAMILIAR THINGS

of the mountains, valueless until it is developed. The less opposed our life is, the less likely is anything remarkable to come out of it. On the other hand, opposition provokes us to assert our powers, and we owe more to the enmities of life than to the amenities.

What is really needed for a valiant life is a wider world-view than most of us possess. Our village is not everything, nor our city, nor even our native state or country. A stately Wall street lawyer, who had reached his seventieth year, once assured a Western friend of mine that he also knew the West—he had once been as far as Albany! This may be taken as a sample of metropolitan parochialism—a not uncommon affliction in confirmed city dwellers—but there is a parochialism of the spirit, too, yet more inexpugnable. What is it but parochialism of spirit that sets a man upon the task of building a fine house, filling it with costly furniture, and making these the means of a certain social eminence among a few hundred persons, whose praises are not worth the having in any case? This is to go West—no farther than

Albany. Our Albany may be the abode of some respectable, if somewhat slipshod virtues, and even of some unvirile forms of happiness—only they are not the West. Life is a place of big horizons, of epic passions, of tremendous projects, of sublime adventures, of famous conquests and achievements. Of every man it is true that the world is his parish. He may be a citizen of this or that city, but first of all he is a citizen of the world. The best place for him is the place in which he can add the most to the world's life. His home, his empire, the land of his nativity is the place where his spirit thrives the best; and over it the Star of Progress rests. To remember that the world is wide, and to act as its inheritor, is to retain the spirit of youth; but there is nothing that so swiftly kills the spirit of youth as this going no farther west than Albany.

One never loses his astonishment at the temper and the spirit of the great Elizabethan voyagers and adventurers. That they had certain plain and practical objects in view, such as commerce and gold-hunting, is plain enough; but

ON LEAVING FAMILIAR THINGS

these are insufficient to account for the extraordinary furore with which courtiers and men of letters rushed upon the most perilous sea adventures. It is almost impossible for us to conceive to-day how great those perils were. They had no charts to go upon, no data of navigation, except of the most dubious kind; once out of sight of land, they sailed into the unknown. Their ships were the merest shallops, fit for nothing more than easy coastwise voyages. The "Golden Hind," which crossed the Atlantic with Sir Humphrey Gilbert, was a vessel of only forty tons, and the "Revenge," with which Sir Richard Grenville fought a whole armada of fifty-three galleons, was not much larger. What was the true dynamic in these astonishing careers? It was the new passion of world-wideness which had seized on all classes of society in this Elizabethan epoch. They were filled with an intoxicating sense of the bigness of life and of the world, and they flung themselves upon the most hazardous adventures with the high spirits of school-boys on a frolic. Insular England was insular no more; she broke

her bounds, like a rising torrent, carrying the seeds of empire to the Indies and Virginia, to Newfoundland and Labrador. The nation which has no sense of world-wideness cannot avoid becoming dwarfed and impoverished; and this is as true of individuals as it is of nations.

The secret of heroism lies in the willingness to take risks, the unwillingness to accept things as they are. Thoreau remarks that the "mass of men lead lives of quiet desperation"; which means that the mass of men accept conditions which they know to be inimical to them. Heroic men do not obey conditions, but create them. The true liberal is essentially heroic, because he is perpetually engaged in creating new conditions; the inborn conservative is essentially dull or cowardly, because he prefers things as they are. These two tempers run through all the planes of life, from the lowest to the highest. They may be observed as readily in rustic communities as in the seats of empire. One lad will prefer a narrow prudence to a doubtful opportunity, and will live and die obscure; another will say farewell to the familiar fields, and ride

out like a knight-errant to tilt against the world. One finds his heaven in the habitual, the other in the novel and surprising. One is of the company of John Gilpin, whose longest journey is from Edmonton to Ware; the other is of the company of Drake and Gilbert, Hudson and Columbus, who fly their flags from the Indies to the Arctic. He who lives life in a cowardly fashion may well live in quiet desperation; he who lives life valiantly rarely fails of high reward; and if he gets no other, he has had the joy of living. A full life, at whatsoever price, will always prove a better bargain than a narrow life whose sole virtue is economy.

Economy, as it is commonly understood and practised, is not so much a virtue as a negation. Economy, when it is applied to the programme of life, rarely goes further than the negation of ambition. Thoreau is forever telling us upon what insignificant expenditures man's physical wants may be supplied, and this lesson, preached to a luxurious age, is undoubtedly of tonic value. When, however, it is pushed farther, and we are urged to administer life itself upon the princi-

ple of the most gain for the least expenditure, we are invited to turn our backs on human progress. Pushed to its logical conclusion, this principle involves the extirpation of all arts, sciences, and literatures, to say nothing of those vast schemes of social betterment which engage the energies of the greatest and best men. No doubt man can live in a cabin and content himself upon a cabbage-patch; but the question is, ought he to do so? In such contentment there is something pusillanimous, and essentially ignoble. What is virtuous in a savage may very easily become criminal in a civilized man. It is a poor kind of life that makes its first consideration how much it can do without, and it ends in intellectual parsimony and spiritual destitution. He who spends himself most freely in the service of the world, is he who is the richest. The invitation to the cabin and the cabbage-patch comes to us to-day through the lips of eloquent philosophers; but the voice is the harsh and peevish voice of the old hermits, anchorites, and ascetics, than whom no more useless and despicable creatures ever lived.

ON LEAVING FAMILIAR THINGS

The greatest lesson of life is learned when we comprehend that we are born for conflict, not for ease; and that the only ease to which we are entitled is the reward of conflict. Things, however familiar and desirable, are but things after all, and a man's life consisteth not in the abundance of things which he possesseth. They lie outside ourselves, and since we must one day leave them altogether, we should not allow them to become necessities of our existence. As long as we use them without abusing them, they are sources of delight; but when we permit them to usurp our affections and occupy our hearts, they raise a fatal barrier between ourselves and all heroic deeds. There is both truth and pathos in the saying of Dr. Johnson to David Garrick, when the successful actor showed him the fine house which he had built and the treasures that it held: "Ah, Davy," said the old Doctor, "this is the kind of thing which makes dying hard work." It makes living, in any great sense, hard work, too. We cannot climb far with a burden of possessions on our backs. Many a man has failed of the

highest not through lack of genius or of purpose, but simply because he was too much entangled in the idolatry of things. The burden on his back was too heavy for the highest climbing.

If we should be called upon to leave familiar things for higher duties, there is always one consolation that remains; in the deepest sense we cannot leave that which has once become a part of our sensations. We are all that we have seen, and been, and done; and however far we range, the land that we have loved travels with us. Amid the palms and plangent sunlight of the tropics, the Scotsman still sees the trailing clouds upon Ben Nevis, and feels the moorland wind on Rannock; the Irish exile sees the brooks that sing and flash beside the cabin door; and in the bursting of the surf upon the reef the English exile hears the roar of London. In dreams and visions of the night we revisit scenes once familiar and beloved, and find ourselves and them alike unchanged. Perhaps, when all our work is done, and the bell rings for rest, we shall find them all restored to us, and scarcely

ON LEAVING FAMILIAR THINGS

recollect how or when we left them. Who shall say but that when we go home at last, it will be home, indeed, to which we go; not to the vain pomp of golden streets, but to some aerial re-duplication of scenes once loved; the soldier, the exile, the old missionary, to green "fields beyond a swelling flood," which bear a magical resemblance to the fields beloved in boyhood, and left so many years ago in an agony of farewell tears? Isaac Watts, so it is said, wrote his famous hymn while he gazed upon Southampton Water, with its distant forests, tranquil in the evening light; it was from these fields of green, beyond the swelling flood, he drew his simple imagery of heaven. It was surely a gracious and inspired thought; for as our heaven here is in familiar things we love, so the only heaven we can count desirable beyond is of familiar things restored.

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X.

On Old Age

THE UPPER ROAD.

The lowland road is pleasant and the upper road is
steep,
The lowland air is windless and its rivers sing of
sleep;
When all the kine are gathered and all the pastures
mowed,
One should go home at evening along the lowland road.

When stalwart knees bend inward and strong-thewed
shoulders tire,
When a man has wrought his utmost and followed his
desire,
When he had starved and feasted and borne a heavy
load,
How good to come at evening along the lowland road.

But if the white peaks beckon, if one be left to scale,
A man should seek the mountains and shun the lowland
vale;
His heart will feel their prompting, and answer to the
goad,
And tho' the hour be evening, he'll take the upper road.

When all Earth's fruits are gathered on silent field and
garth,
When song is at the winepress and mirth is at the
hearth,
There is another harvest whose seed we have not sowed—
You'll find the orchards of the Lord upon the upper
road.

I'm going by the upper road, for that still holds the
sun;
I'm climbing thro' Night's pastures, where starry rivers
run;
If you should think to seek me in my old dark abode,
You'll find this writing on the door—"He's on the Up-
per Road."

X.

ON OLD AGE

A GREAT deal has been written on old age, and, one suspects, a great deal that is insincere. The gallant spirit of man is continually engaged in the effort to make the best of the inevitable, but this kind of exercise is usually more creditable to his sentiment than his reason. It is, indeed, very like the games of make-believe which children play, in which imagination triumphs over reality. What is it but a kind of pathetic make-believe that exchanges the dreary fact of death for the sweet synonym of sleep, or the lassitude and inactivity of age for autumnal mellowness or evening calm? In our hearts we know the metaphors imperfect, delusive, and incapable of demonstration. Death may bear the resemblance of sleep, but it is not sleep, for there is no visible awakening into new vigor; and old age may suggest the sun that sets in splendor at the close of a long day, but, unlike the setting sun, it has

no bright to-morrow. We are the victims of our metaphors, and perhaps it is not wise to examine them too closely. If they serve our turn, by nourishing our courage, it is something to be thankful for. The soldier, with his dream of glory, is in much the same situation. It is no very noble fate to die by murder in the act of murdering others, but by means of flags and trumpets, heroic words and high-sounding promises of fame, the soldier finds himself truly inspired for heroic actions. We all need our flags and trumpets if we are to march heroically against the facts of life; and there are many difficult occasions when a metaphor may serve us much more efficiently than a dogma.

Whether man's happier fate is to die in the fullness of his powers, or at the close of their long decline, will always remain an open question. The ancients expressed one view, when they held that whom the gods love die young; Robert Browning, who is the exponent of the modern spirit, quite another, when he wrote:

Grow old along with me,
The best is yet to be.

Which of the two is right, it is hard to say, if we have regard only to particular instances. Keats was probably fortunate in dying young, for he could hardly have surpassed the premature perfection of his own great odes, and he might have fallen below it; Chatterton was unfortunate, for his early verse gives intimations only of a surprising genius. No one thinks of Wolfe as unhappy in dying on the Heights of Abraham, or of Nelson dying at Trafalgar; of the latter, Southey declares that he died the most triumphant of all deaths, "that of the martyr; the most awful, that of the martyred patriot; the most splendid, that of the hero in the hour of victory." Could old age have added anything to the fame of Nelson? Might it not, knowing as we do his amiable weaknesses as well as his heroic virtues, have done much to diminish it? Would it not have been far happier for Swift, if he had been spared an old age which exhibited him to the world as "a driveller and a show"? Can we not readily recall instances of statesmen who had been famous had they died at fifty, but in living to be seventy fell into

general disesteem? Cannot we recall men whom we have known whose chief misfortune was that they outlived their usefulness, their reputation, and perhaps their character? The death of Raphael at thirty-seven may be justly accounted a public calamity, but of how many other artists is it true that they lived only to undo in age the fame that they had won in youth? So the record runs, and it is fertile in contradictions. Neither pagan nor modern is wholly right. Each position is untenable, and each statement can be made absurd. To grow old with Browning is one thing; to grow old with Keats might prove quite another.

— Instances, then, can teach us little, and we have to fall back on principles. It is certain that we all, either consciously or unconsciously, expect old age. It appears part of our natural heritage. No one, unless he has received some physical premonition of decay, expects to die young. We quietly assume, in spite of many warnings to the contrary, that nothing less than the threescore years and ten of man's full life will be our portion. Thus we insure ourselves

to receive certain benefits at sixty in the full belief that we shall live to enjoy the fruits of our providence. We save our money, we buy estates, we build houses with a view to the long evening of life, which is to be spent in ease and dignity, with troops of friends and all the quiet joys that should accompany old age. And the point to be noticed is that in such acts we manifest our wisdom—not our folly. These acts are the expression of our will to live. Whether old age comes to us or not, it is well to assume that it will come. Such an assumption gives dignity to our daily acts, invests them with responsibility, makes them parts in a maturing plan of life. If, in view of the supreme uncertainty of life, a good deal of make-believe goes to these actions, it is heroic make-believe; for, without it, the element of design would be wanting in our life, and also the stimulating element of hope.

The natural, that is to say, the healthy-minded man, will aim to live as long as he can; and even saintly persons, who have some right to anticipate a better world, have been known to die with extreme reluctance. But the natural

man will be very far from accepting the cheerful dogma of Browning that the best of life is found in age. Mrs. Julia Ward Howe did remark characteristically at ninety that "all the sugar was in the bottom of the cup," but then life had given her a good deal of sugar. She had aimed high and succeeded; she had comfortable means and good health, and she lived to enjoy the full fruit of work done in her maturity. Goethe, whose aim was yet higher, and whose circumstances might be accounted fortunate, confessed at seventy-five that his life had been labor and sorrow, the perpetual rolling of a stone up a hill, from which it perpetually slipped back again. Old age may have its compensations, but it is very far from being the best of life. There is, indeed, no sadder moment than that in which a man realizes for the first time that he has turned the high ridge of life, and that henceforth the path is toward the sunset. The high peaks he will climb no more; his road lies along the quiet meadows where the shadows deepen. Henceforth the battle of the strong is not for him; he will hear the

shouting of the captains, but will no more lead the van of battle. As he once raced past his elders to the post of honor, so the young, rejoicing in their strength, now race past him with mocking laughter. How golden youth appears now, and how swiftly was its wealth expended! How fine the daring of its inexperience, the wonder of its egoism, the pride of its unreason! How gladly would he barter all the sad experience of age for one day of that unthinking rapture! It is hard to admit it, but the truth must be told—the heart's beat is slower, the mind's vision is less clear and vigorous. He, for whom once the day's work could never be too hard, must now needs put a limit to his toil; he must not press nerve or brain too hard; he must humor his digestion, arrange his diet, guard against colds, make acquaintance with doctors, who talk to him in solemn and pontifical conundrums; he must, in fact, learn to go softly with a cautious step, accommodate himself to small infirmities, and if he is to live at all, live only by a wise economy of means. And is this the best of life? It were absurd to say

so. The evening may have charms, but alas, it holds the threat of darkness; the morning also has charms, but it holds the promise of the long, bright day. When we prefer evening to morning, we may prefer age to youth—not before.

This crossing the high ridge of life is, nevertheless, a somewhat imaginary business; it resembles those artificial demarcations between states and empires, which we should not recognize unless we were informed of them. At what period may we fix the grand climacteric? At what year does age begin? Our ancestors of a century ago reckoned sixty a sound old age. In the novels, histories, and essays of the eighteenth century, it is quite common to find even persons of fifty spoken of as patriarchs. The reason is obvious—the age was a hard-living, hard-drinking age, ignorant of science and sanitation, and the average longevity was low. It is surprising that it was not lower, for among the habits of these jovial eighteenth century folk was a total absence of fresh air in sleeping rooms, a dislike to the bath, and a habit of three bottles of wine per man at dinner. I, myself,

have slept in old-fashioned houses, where the chimneys were stopped with sacks of straw, the windows screwed down, and, as a final defence against fresh air, sand-bags laid against the sashes, and the bed itself provided with impermeable curtains. We have altered all that. We have opened our windows, made the daily bath a sacred rite, and substituted rational meals for drinking orgies. The result is seen in the much higher average of longevity. It is a matter of common remark that old women are rare in modern society. The charms of the young girl are outrivalled by the maturer charms of her mother—perhaps of her grandmother. The man of sixty is as sprightly as the youth of twenty-six. If he has crossed the high ridge of life it is unconsciously, as one may pass a State boundary at night, asleep in a Pullman car. At an age when his eighteenth century ancestor would have been helpless with the gout, he golfs, travels, conducts his business, drives an automobile, and is thinking of learning aviation. If science has not yet taught us the secret of rejuvenation or eternal youth, it has certainly

taught us how to postpone indefinitely the dreaded claims of age.

The fact is, age is a condition that is not measurable by years, but by qualities. A man is as old as he chooses to be; at any rate, as old as he allows himself to be. A man, jaded and sated by an empty or profligate career, may be old at thirty; whereas, a man of Gladstone's calibre enters on a kind of riper second youth at eighty. Among Gray's friends was one whom Arnold designates "that mercurial Swiss," and describes as both "younger and livelier from his sixtieth year to his eightieth than at any other time of his life." Gray regarded him with envy: "I never saw such a boy," he writes; "our breed is not made on this model." Light-heartedness is undoubtedly an excellent elixir against age; so also is work that interests us, aims that absorb us, ideals that impassion us. The man whose life is absorbed in great tasks and duties has not time to grow old. His work vitalizes him. There is nothing that so soon ages men as the exhaustion of a life of trivialities. A great object in life is the best of all tonics; it

keeps our vital energies fresh and high; but in the proportion that a life is empty, it becomes the fertile soil for the deeds of decay. I will repeat again the story of the man who retired from business, built himself a fine house, and sat down to the weary task of doing nothing. He died within a year, and his doctor said he died "from lack of nervous excitement." A great many people have died from that cause; having no particular stimulus to live, they simply lost their hold on life. As long as we continue swimming, the friendly waters bear us up; it is only when we are quiescent that they overwhelm us. Many of the greatest men, who have lived longest, had constitutions far from vigorous; but they drew from the very contentions of their lives a vital fire, which served them better than robust health. If some men die from having too much to do, there are many more who die from not having enough; or, it may be, in the one case the thing done is high and worthy, and in the other it is a thing not worth the doing. If a man shall say, "I cannot afford to die while my family and the world need me so

much," he may count on rising superior to the tables of mortality. If, on the contrary, he shall say, "I am too old to work," Nature will take him at his word, and begin to demolish, without scruple, the useless house of life. We may be old at fifty if we will; but if our interest in life is strong, it is likely enough we may find ourselves younger at seventy than we were at fifty. We make our own calendars. If we delete December and insist on June, there is a fair chance that Nature may applaud our gallantry, and approve our whim.

The exploits of old men are certainly as marvellous as the exploits of youth. If it be a wonderful thing for Raphael to paint his Transfiguration at thirty-seven, it is equally astonishing that Michael Angelo should complete his eight years of toil on the Last Judgment at sixty-six; and if we marvel at William Pitt ruling an empire at twenty-five, we marvel yet more at Gladstone ruling a much more splendid and complicated empire at eighty. The doctrine of "too old at forty," is reduced to absurdity by such examples. Great minds have rarely

reached maturity at forty; we should be nearer the mark if we put the period of maturity between sixty and seventy. John Knox was fifty when he learned Hebrew, and Goethe sixty-six when he commenced the study of oriental literature. George Cruikshank at sixty was not ashamed to attend the drawing classes of the Royal Academy, and Sydney Smith, at eighty, was discovered with a copy-book and lexicon, busy learning French. Where the intellect retains its eagerness, it lifts the body to its own level of activity. We may not be able to do as much work at seventy as at forty, but we may do finer work, for our knowledge of our powers is more exact, and our control of them more complete. Mental vitality has more to do with physical vitality than we imagine. Dean Swift said sadly that he would "die at the top"; it is there that death usually begins, in the mind, not in the body. If mental depression can disorganize the physical functions, it is equally true that mental exaltation can invigorate them. Cruikshank, sitting with the boys in a drawing-class, was imbibing youth from them, and Syd-

ney Smith, with his copy-book, was putting in a claim to a fresh childhood. There is always something worth doing, and something that we can do, even though we have but a day to live. Our best birthday is not in the past; it always lies just a year ahead of us.

We can accommodate ourselves to almost any situation if we have to, and it should not be difficult to accommodate ourselves to age. Raleigh, after all his adventurous wanderings, can settle down for twelve years in the Tower and write his *History of the World*, and Argyle slept in a prison as soundly as he had ever slept. Old age is much more a mental conception than an actual fact, a ghost that seems dreadful until we approach it, when it turns out to be nothing more than moonshine. At twenty, fifty seems a great age; when we reach fifty we are surprised to find that the road we travel is much the same, but the company is better. If there is less beating of drums and shrilling of trumpets, there are more victorious names inscribed upon our banners; if there are fewer rainbows in the sky, there is wider sunlight. A great

part of the wisdom of life lies in the simple art of living a day at a time. An old Federal soldier once told me the story of his sixteen months' imprisonment in a Southern prison. The conditions were deplorable. There was little food, much sickness, the men were clothed in rags, and great numbers of them died. "How did you survive?" I asked. "Why, I said to myself the first day, 'I shall be released tomorrow'; and every day I repeated to myself that this was no doubt my last day. I just lived a day at a time." He added further that the men who died the soonest were those of a melancholy temperament, who spent their time brooding over their unhappy lot. As I listened to the story, I realized that this cheerful old fellow had discovered the only philosophy of life that is of practical value and utility. He made it his one business to get through the present hour the best way he could; and that is, after all, the chief business for us all. God closes each day with the forgetfulness of sleep, as if to teach us that we do well to avoid both retrospective and prospective thought. To for-

get the future, if we are making the best use of the present, may prove the best method of preparing for it.

Cheerfulness is a virtue commonly attributed to youth, but I think the most cheerful persons I have known have been old. Youth is very often far from cheerful; it is morbid, introspective, over-sensitive; it is full of the ferment of life, and its wine does not run clear. The most despairing poems have usually been written by young men, and the sereneest by old. If a man has gone about the business of life with intelligence, by the time he is sixty he will have made the pleasant discovery that the world is a much better place to live in than he supposed it at twenty. He will have discovered that many of its rules that seemed harsh are based on wisdom; that, upon the whole, life means well by men; that most men desire to act, and indeed do act as well as they know how; that if the world holds many rogues and fools, it holds many more good comrades, faithful friends, and generous counsellors; that what we thought the hostility of life toward us was really the reflex

ON OLD AGE

of our hostility toward life; that in spite of all that pessimism may proclaim, the available happiness of life exceeds its necessary misery; and these discoveries will modify his earlier misjudgments of men, teach him charity and toleration, and go far to sweeten and illumine his own character. He will have learned not to ask too much of men; not to make too extravagant demands on happiness, not to resent disappointments too bitterly. He will desire less what he has not, and enjoy more what he has. He will have attained something better than either, something that is the final flower of all, that high cheerfulness which springs, not from natural temperament, but practised wisdom; the song of the stars, which, from the resolution of many discords, attains a final harmony.

It goes without saying that age does not always attain that spirit. Most of us can think of men who in age have been tyrannical, querulous, cynical, embittered; a misery to themselves and a plague to all who know them. They sit beside the fire and grumble; and it is nothing to them that the warmest nook and the best seat

THE BOOK OF COURAGE

are theirs. Should the meal be late, the coffee cold, the special dish not properly prepared, they relieve their indignation in terms that might have seemed extravagant on the lips of a persecuted Job or a deserted Lear. They damp the spirits of the young with the fierce assertion that the world is going to the bad. They rebuke the child's gayety and hopefulness with solemn warnings that he will know better one day. They insist on painting life in dismal colors. If they are eloquent, it is in diatribes against the knaves they have known, but the friends they never mention. Nothing suits them, not even a summer sky; for, if it does not rain to-day, they are quite sure it will to-morrow. Unhappy old men! Does it never strike you to inquire why it is the children shun you; why they are uneasy in your presence, and go on tiptoe past your door; why the very dog hides himself at your approaching footstep? Unhappy, fierce-eyed old men, is there no better employment for age than chewing the cud of bitter memory, and drawing from your stores of

past experience only those things which are the least pleasant or profitable to recall?

Let me request you to look upon a very different picture, that you may learn how beautiful a thing old age may be. The woman of whom I am thinking had more than her share of troubles, and had none of those advantages of culture which build up the philosophic mind. Her husband died in mid-life; her only son followed him in early manhood; her daughters married, and she was left alone. What competence she had—and it was small—had been won by her own exertions. At seventy she retired to a little house, where she lived alone. For nearly ten years you might have seen her sitting at her window, perpetually industrious; making garments for her grandchildren, writing cheerful gossip to her daughters, reading many books she had not had the time to open in her earlier life. In those ten years her mind grew daily, for, with leisure, her interest in the world grew more lively. She loved to recall the past, but always with a gentle tolerance, never with any bitterness. Nothing pleased her grandchildren

better than to hear her describe the quaint ways of her old neighbors, their humble histories, the things they did and said; for she had a natural art of fresh and humorous narration. And it seemed to those who knew her, that the sweet old face grew younger in those closing years; even to the last it was fresh and soft as the face of a young girl. When she died, how cheerful was the memory she left! When we went through the silent rooms there was no chill of death in the air. The sun shone brightly; her work-basket lay with its unfinished task upon the table, her books beside the bed, and it seemed she moved beside us, smiling wisely, her dress giving forth its old remembered perfume—a living presence. We never think of her as dead; we see her still sitting at the window, making garments for those beloved grandchildren, who themselves have children now. Her fortitude, her cheerfulness, her tolerance and sweetness, made old age beautiful; for she carried into age the spirit of a child, so that it became a riper and a wiser childhood.

XI.

**The Courage of an
Obscure Life**

CITY AND COUNTRY.

The city burns like a flower of flame,
The palace has doors of gold;
A man must struggle and play the game
If, ere his mind grow old,
He would traverse the space that intervenes,
And sit with the kings and queens.

For the road is long, and it hath no rest—
Let him travel who must—
And perchance he finds, should he gain his quest,
That the kings and queens are dust,
Shadows that moan, thro' rust-worn screens,
Such are earth's kings and queens.

In the country each day is a golden door
That swings on a bar of song;
Tho' a man be simple and hath no store
He may take his ease among
The gardens o'er which Heaven's shadow leans,
And sit with the kings and queens.

For, being meek, he shall own the earth
And all bright things that are;
He shall gather the delicate flowers of mirth
And sleep with his head on a star,
And shall know the secret of what life means,
And rank with God's kings and queens.

XI.

THE COURAGE OF AN OBSCURE LIFE

THE study of great lives is a necessary and animating business, for such lives give the measure of what human life may be.

The young sculptor may never equal Phidias, the young dramatist never equal Shakespeare, but such examples draw his eyes upward and set the standard for his own excellence. There is a period of life when great men and small men are so much alike that none but a prophetic eye can discern the difference, viz., the period of childhood. They eat, drink, and play together; read the same books, are schooled by the same master, love the same maiden as like as not; and then at a certain fork in the road they part company, the one to an olive orchard in the hills, and the other to a victory beneath the Pyramids and a coronation in Notre Dame. The childhood of great men has rarely revealed much that is worth attention; their freaks of daring or their sudden pregnant sayings can be matched

by those of a thousand clever children whose names are not remembered. It would appear that greatness is, after all, a manufactured article. It is the joint product of effort and opportunity. There are some very good reasons for the belief that the child's nature is like a sheet of white paper on which anything may be written. At all events, this general equality of men at the beginning of the road is an invigorating thought, for it enforces the deduction that the disparities between men may be, after all, much less than we suppose.

All hero-worship springs from the sense of the heroic in ourselves. It is really the projection of ourselves into a world of new dimensions. We admire our hero, but it is always with an oblique glance at ourselves. The young Bonaparte, saturating his imagination with the histories of Plutarch's heroes, is paying homage to his own powers; and, in the same way, the modern schoolboy, reading *Treasure Island* with a thrilling heart, does so because he recognizes in himself the makings of a pirate or an adventurer. Dull men have been known to resent ex-

hortations based upon the lives of great men, on the ground that they set up impossible standards for ordinary people; but it is because they will not profit by such exhortations that they are dull. On what lives should we preach, if not the greatest? Does not the spectacle of superb achievement by one like ourselves spur us to high endeavor, and arm us for victory? The value of great lives is that they are the expressions of the greatness of the race. They are human nature in apotheosis. They are sublime interpretations of the human soul. They take the common elements of life and mix them in the crucible of action, as Nature takes charcoal, flame, and moisture, and out of them produces the diamond from whose heart a hundred prisoned suns salute us. They are, in truth, the jewels that flame upon the crown of Time. When we admire them we honor ourselves; for the proud thought cannot be repressed that we are compounded of the same elements; and in our pit of obscurity we may burn with the same flame as they upon their pinnacles of fame.

Napoleon once said that he knew as much

about the art of war on his first battlefield as he ever knew; all that he learned afterward was experience. This means that he was essentially as great a soldier when he was obscure as when he was immortal. The saying is a memorable one, for it teaches us that a man's greatness is not to be judged by the size of the stage he plays on, but by the part he plays. In the nature of things the great bulk of mankind must always remain obscure. There is only room for one Cromwell, one Garibaldi, one Napoleon in a century. Only at long intervals, amid the crash of falling thrones and struggling causes, is so high a stage erected that he who treads it becomes visible to all the ages. But upon the lesser stage, where there are few observers, the part enacted may be as great, and as greatly rendered. Edmund Kean, acting Hamlet in a barn to a beggarly array of empty benches, was the same Kean who thrilled all London with the same part upon the stage of Drury Lane. Paganini, playing his violin at a street corner, played no less exquisitely than when he performed in the presence of kings and queens.

COURAGE OF AN OBSCURE LIFE

Lincoln, defending popular rights in a small local court with trenchant logic, was the same Lincoln who reached immortal eloquence at Gettysburg. It is the actor who makes the part and not the stage. Greatness is in man, not in his environment. Obscurity or fame are but secondary matters; our character and not our reputation is of prime consequence; and in the last adjudication,

All service ranks the same with God;
If now, as formerly he trod
Paradise, his presence fills
Our earth, each only as God wills
Can work . . .

There is no last nor first.

Since the common fate is obscurity, the obvious wisdom of life is to make obscurity respectable by the virtues we inject into it. To maintain a decent level of courage, cheerfulness, and kindness in an obscure life is not an easy task. If the famous life has great trials, it has also great inspirations; the obscure life has the trials without the triumphs. Most men could carry themselves heroically upon a battlefield, amid the call of trumpets, and with some glittering vision

of glory at the end of the long day; it requires a yet rarer heroism to fight obscurely, without praise, and with no sense of applauding spectators. The man who keeps the torch of the ideal burning bright in the gray air of a drudging and monotonous life, is probably doing the most heroic thing that man can ever do. It was of such men Emily Dickinson was thinking when she wrote her quaint and suggestive lines:

It's very well to fight aloud,
But gallanter, I know,
Who charge within the bosom
The cavalry of woe.

For such in plumed procession
I trust the angels go,
Rank upon rank with even feet
And uniforms of snow.

The merit of the great is known to men; the merit of the humble is known to God alone.

Let me take, for example, the lives of my own parents; for in describing them I shall doubtless be describing the parents of a great many of my readers. They lived a long while ago, and for the most part among rural communities. The conveniences which we take for granted in

COURAGE OF AN OBSCURE LIFE

the general life of to-day, such as telephones, electric light, rapid transit, the frequent delivery of mails, and so forth, were, of course, quite unknown. Only in a few great cities did public libraries exist; there was not one to be found in the smaller towns. Books were expensive; they were practically the privilege of the rich. Means of locomotion were exceedingly imperfect. To live in a rural community was to be practically exiled from all the larger forms of life. To the best of my remembrance, my parents never took a holiday. They saw nothing of friends and relations a hundred miles away. Not only the great cities of Europe, but the great cities of their own country were to them mere geographical expressions. They never looked upon a great picture, heard a great musical performance, or witnessed a great national pageant. That knowledge of the world which is conveyed to-day to the loneliest hamlet by the means of great newspapers and magazines, was denied to them, for the age of the popular press had not arrived. Here then were lives thoroughly acquainted with obscurity, and so limited in range

that it is difficult to think of them without commiseration.

How were such lives lived? They were passed in a round of duties, as noble as any duties that man can perform in the highest sphere of living. There were children to be trained and educated, neighbors to be visited in sickness and helped in misfortune, many tasks that had a direct bearing on the communal welfare to be accomplished. Every day brought its duties, some of them difficult enough. There was, for example, that daily heroic struggle to make the most of narrow means, which might have proved a puzzling problem to a financier of empire. And there was a standard of virtue, integrity, and character to be maintained which might have tasked the energies of the greatest public moralist. And there was also a daily effort to concentrate the rays of intelligence, to manufacture knowledge out of scant material, which might have baffled the most industrious philosopher. How great the courage, the patience, the persistence needed for living like that! On a broader stage such qualities might be more con-

COURAGE OF AN OBSCURE LIFE

spicuous, but they could not be more real. The cell of coral, built with its exquisite precision of geometric design, is as much a work of art as the dome of St. Peter's in Rome. People better known than my parents have passed across the world amid general applause, but people better in themselves never have. The total effect of what they were and did is a question of scale; the intrinsic quality of their lives puts them among the heroic. To the eye of the world I may have gone much further than they, and annexed realms they never heard of; but if I begin to measure achievement by opportunity I am, and must always remain, inferior to them. It took greater qualities to live their lives than it does to lead mine, for theirs were much more difficult to live than mine.

I have said that it is difficult to think of lives like these without a sense of commiseration, but is not this because, instead of judging such lives by their own standards, we apply to them the standards of our own lives, which are so different? A man who has grown up in an age of marvellous mechanical and engineering

achievements which have made all nations neighbors, will naturally regard the isolated life with pity; but those who lived before the age of Cook's excursions found it no hardship to do without them. We have broadened the area of our sensations; but the prime material of sensation remains much the same. It is much to see Rome and the Alps; but a man's Rome, if he choose to make it so, may be the nearest market town, and his Matterhorn may be the green hill behind his house, which he climbs at evening for the love of ampler air. The same star of evening hangs over each, the same sunrise makes each beautiful; and the sensations provoked by each are not radically different. We greatly misread the obscure and humble life when we forget that it is possible for the humblest life to sound the whole vast gamut of human emotion. Hope and fear, love, sorrow, and affection; the reaching out of the heart toward beautiful ideals, the agonies of loss and disappointment, the bright ecstatic hours of triumph, are found in all lives. The man who has saved his first thousand dollars by years of frugality has as real a

COURAGE OF AN OBSCURE LIFE

sensation of wealth as the multi-millionaire; and kings weeping for lost kingdoms shed no more tragic tears than the workman who has lost his job. The physical dimensions of a life count for nothing; it is the quality of the drama that is everything. We live in thoughts and feelings, and the obscurest life has room enough for the loftiest thoughts and most exalted feelings; for faith and devotion, fortitude and patience, love and death.

Those upon whom an obscure life bears most hardly are they who have already known a life which is the reverse of obscure. It has been my lot to meet from time to time old ministers, and some who were not old, who have been relegated from the van of their profession to the background, through failure of health or some similar misfortune. I can still see their dignified and pathetic figures, clothed in the broadcloth which has seen better days, hanging on the skirts of life like discarded captains, their wistful old faces sad and soft with that remembering look of the soul whose chief habitation is in the past. After years of pleasant and various exertion

they experience an unsought release; they must needs learn to move on a narrow round; and they must reconcile themselves to the galling thought that younger men have entered on a heritage that appeared inalienably theirs. These younger men, should they meet them, will not always have the grace to conceal the sense of their own superiority. They will speak as if the heritage which has come to them was never rightly administered till they took charge of it. They will magnify the wisdom of their own methods, and not be too careful to conceal their disdain of the methods of their predecessors; to all of which the old minister must learn to listen with humility, and possess his soul in patience. Here is a hard lot indeed, and it is paralleled in the worlds of business and of academic thought. The man who had dealt in millions may find himself forced to spend his last days in the manipulation of the narrow budgets of poverty. The college professor may find himself superseded at an age when he not unjustly thinks himself most efficient, and the writer who has tasted applause may discover that his vogue has gone.

COURAGE OF AN OBSCURE LIFE

Life is full of these tragedies of relegation to the rear, of reduction to the ranks, of supersession, of pathetic and not ignoble defeat. They are tragedies which may happen to any one, for as the highest wisdom cannot foresee them, neither can the most jealous prudence guard against them.

Yet even in these circumstances there are some consolations worth remembering. It may hurt our vanity to recollect Voltaire's saying that "the necessary man does not exist," but, nevertheless, there is a tonic common-sense in the epigram of the old scoffer. Life went on pretty well before we came on the stage, and it is quite certain that our exit will not arrest the drama. As long as we play our part well while our day lasts, we have little cause to complain. Let the ungracious young men sneer as they may, we have this advantage that our trial is over and theirs is all to come. It is a harder thing than it appears to contrive an honorable exit from a crowded stage; Gladstone once spoke of it as the chief business of old age. As for obscurity itself, we may remember that many men, far

greater, and more famous than ourselves, have sought it rather than feared it. Great kings have left their thrones for cloisters, great statesmen have retired to solitude, great writers have desired to live their last days "the world forgetting, by the world forgot." Fame has always proved a thorny crown. Men of fine minds are always haunted by a sense of something inadequate, something almost degrading, in a life that thrives on publicity. When Dickens, on his retirement from the unexampled triumphs of his public readings, spoke of leaving "these garish lights forever," he uttered the condemnation of himself; and we, who can see the end from the beginning in his life, know well enough that it had been far better for him and us if he had never sought them. Moreover, we were all obscure enough once, and we shall be yet more obscure when the dust has closed over us. It may do us no harm, but a great deal of good, to rehearse a little for our final part.

The worst element in the crowded and various life is that the soul is apt to diminish in the process. We have only so much soul—a sort of di-

COURAGE OF AN OBSCURE LIFE

vine fluid stored in the secret cells of being—and the store is easily wasted. Souls grow in solitude. The divine fluid needs dews and silence, if it is to rise as the sap rises in the tree, and produce perfect fruit. It may be that in growing a fame or a fortune we have had no time to grow a soul. Our worldly triumphs have been our spiritual disasters. In spending ourselves too freely on the world we have become spiritual bankrupts. We are no doubt unwilling to admit this; but if we will sit down and take just account of what our public life has cost us, we shall not be long in discovering that it has cost us too much. Let us grant, however, that it was worth the doing, even though the cost was high. We would do it all again, even at the same price, for our work has contributed some worthy element to the general progress. But this will not prevent our seeing that a release from labor, when our best is done, is in the nature of a mercy. We have time at last to become acquainted with ourselves. There are probably a great many matters of importance to ourselves, if to no one else, that need our attention. There

are long arrears of both soul and mind culture to be made up. Very probably there are also arrears of love, for we have been so engrossed in outward affairs that our caresses have been stinted, our expressions of affection hasty and inadequate, and the old lyric note of love has been rarely sounded. With our entrance on a quieter mode of life that note will revive. We may even recapture the first raptures of affection. We may find a new Eden, better than the lost Paradise of youth. If we have lost much that seemed important to us, we have still left a sacred treasure, whose forgotten wealth will more than recompense us—the treasure of a quiet mind, a contented spirit, a loving heart.

Everything depends on the kind of spirit which we take with us into an obscure life. If we remain proud, fretful, envious, our obscurity will be our hell. We shall move with drawn brows amid a crowd of sombre regrets. We shall find no good word to say for our fellow-men, especially for those who occupy our former places. If, on the other hand, we take with us a quiet and contented spirit, we may make our

COURAGE OF AN OBSCURE LIFE

obscurity our heaven. We shall soon discover that life still holds for us not only many interests, but many exquisite delights. We shall know what it is to wake in the morning quietly and to go about our tasks unhurried. We shall begin to take note of the colors of the sunrise, the burgeoning of trees in spring, the note of birds, the shape and scent of flowers, the splendid succession of the seasons. The material universe will be reborn for us. We shall know what our first parents felt when all Eden was new and fresh to them. We shall touch primal things again, the old natural delights of life. It will not be surprising if before long we come to think that the obscure life is the best of all lives. Many men who have been famous have made that profession. There is no reason to judge them insincere.

By the obscure life I do not mean the life of poverty. There is no more foolish cant than the cant about the happiness of poverty. It can never be other than disastrous when the means of life are so exiguous that the whole strength of the intelligence is spent on the task of getting

a living, instead of living. I am speaking of a life not necessarily poor, but only simple; not so much narrow in means as narrow in environment. Nor am I discussing whether the more happiness is found in the humble or the famous life. Here also the whole theme is overlaid by entire avalanches of cant. The only point I wish to make is that it is possible to live an obscure life in a great, or, at least, in a sufficing way.

Life is always, in the last analysis, an affair of the spirit. Outward conditions, being wholly relative, are of inferior importance. The one thing needful is to let spiritual rather than material aims rule and guide us. The purpose of life is self-development; the secret of life is equipoise; the triumph of life is spiritual integrity. So long as these ends are reached it does not much matter what the exterior environment of our lives may be. It is enough if we are willing to make them the chief ends of existence; the mode of their expression will take care of itself. If I have touched upon the fortitude and heroism of obscure lives it is that I may vindicate the

COURAGE OF AN OBSCURE LIFE

greatness of man under whatsoever garb of circumstance; and it is also, because in an age of splendid materialism, it is more than ever necessary to assert that man can be always greater than his environment. Circumstances are but the frame of the picture, which can make it neither bad nor good. The great thing is the picture itself—how to design it with a lofty art, how to make it the interpretation of lofty ideals, and how to make it glow with eternal colors.

XII.

The Meaning of Life

O SOUL, MY STAR!

When the eye grows dim and the heart beats low,
And we come to the end of the road we know,
O Soul, that hath travelled with me so far,
Fear not the road that thou yet must go,
O Soul, my Star!

The walls of the heavens rise high and white,
God wakes from sleep in His tent of Night,
And Morning loosens the tent's low bar;
Behold He comes in the morning light,
O Soul, my Star!

Here endeth the body's toil and pain,
Earth-built it falls to the earth again;
But thou, fresh-armed for a larger war,
Shalt find in the body's loss thy gain,
O Soul, my Star!

No more for thee is the world's vain game,
The mind's distress nor the body's shame,
God-like thou shalt dwell where the godlike are,
Who conquer beneath God's oriflamme,
O Soul, my Star!

When the heart beats low I will hold this true,
That the end of the old begins the new.
In a world which ending cannot mar
Advance to the work thou hast yet to do,
O Soul, my Star!


The creature of dust hath had its hour:
It shall melt and mix with the grass and flower;
But thou, caught up in the prophet's car,
Flame-steeded, shalt find new roads of power,
O Soul, my Star!

XII

THE MEANING OF LIFE

WE have now reached a point when we are fairly face to face with the greatest of all questions, "What is the meaning of life?" Sooner or later every man has to find some sort of answer to that question. He can live neither wisely nor courageously without it, however partial it may be. It may even be said that a wrong answer, or an answer only partially right, is better than none; for he who thinks himself right, even though he be wrong, will attain better ends than he who is wholly uncertain as to the right or wrong of his acts. It is doubt that kills; it is faith that makes alive. A state of dubiety is a state of impotence; on such terms a man's life simply withers. Robert Lee was wrong in his definition of where his duty lay when the Civil War broke out, but he went upon the wrong path with a heroism so unselfish and consummate, that his error was eclipsed by his virtues; and Mahomet was certainly wrong in his

conception of the truth of life, but he reached greatness notwithstanding. The fact is that until a man can find a sufficing syllogism for life, he is without incentive to live at all.



This urgent need for a sufficing syllogism of life accounts for the immense hold which dogma has had upon the human mind. A dogma is simply the positive assertion of principles which claim to be regarded as indubitable. When a father tells his child that to take what is not his is wrong, or that honesty is the best policy, he is asserting dogmas which are supposed to contain indisputable truths. In reality they are very far from indisputable, as the father knows quite well. In a communal society, for example, there is no mine or thine, and therefore no such thing as theft; and as for the latter maxim, there is enough in the history of how great fortunes have been accumulated to lead one to suppose that it was first uttered in jest or irony. Nevertheless, time has proved that it is a good thing for a child to start his little life with these dogmas, for their aim is right. In the same way, theologians present us with a whole arcana of dog-

mas, which they would have us accept as indubitable, although none know so well as themselves that not one could stand the test of logical examination. Yet their aim is right, for they recognize that the average man needs direction; that he will not move at all without it; that he is willing to escape a debate for which he is unfitted, if he can find some fairly rational conclusion upon the nature of life, which he may take for granted. Nothing affords a more striking witness of man's need of some definition of life, in order that he may live at all, than his pathetic and passionate loyalty to dogmas, many of which are incredible, and still more of which are rationally unintelligible.

It may be said that most people do not trouble themselves about a working definition of life, and appear to get on quite well without one. It is quite true that most people live, rather than discuss life, which is a highly sensible procedure; but it does not follow that they never discuss life. Who knows the thoughts of a man? Who knows what dim discussions go on in the brain of the most ordinary man? Where is the man

who has not at times stretched out his hand unto the immensity of things and withdrawn it in fear; wondered at the strange mechanism of his own mind and body; wondered most of all at what may be his final destiny? Even children and savages interrogate the universe on these matters. They realize that somehow their position in relation to the universe is astonishing and perplexing. That such thoughts are not normal and continuous in ordinary men is plain enough; the remarkable thing is that they occur at all.

If they come at no other time, they never fail to assert themselves in the hours when the fortunes of life appear to go against us. We may live instinctively and without thought when we are happy; the moment unhappiness overtakes us we find our entire mind suddenly awake, and voluble with accusation. It is then we need a theory of life, some definite and dogmatic assertion of its meaning, for without some such theory to help us we are likely to be overwhelmed. We may take in illustration a case all too common in these days, that of the business man who is suddenly confronted with ruin, and is tempted

to suicide. Will he succumb to that temptation? It will all depend upon what he believes to be the meaning of life. If he believes in no extension of life beyond the present, and of no purpose in life other than that of immediate happiness, there will be nothing to restrain him from suicide. He will ask why should he go on living when life has lost its savor, what end is to be attained by dragging through a few ignominious years in bitterness and poverty? The house of dust, the dull mindless quiet of the grave will appear sweet to him, and infinitely desirable. If, on the other hand, he has long ago recognized this life as in some way a discipline and preparation for some higher modes of life beyond the grave, the thought of suicide will be impossible to him. While yet the dust of his fallen purpose fills the air he will plan a new edifice upon the ruin, and he will accept what has happened as a phase in his progress, not as a finality. The whole difference between the man and another in the way in which each confronts misfortune, is a difference of view concerning the real and ultimate meaning of life.

What then can we say about life and its meaning? Can we find a sufficing definition? Man, as we know him, appears to be a creature of both extraordinary greatness and extraordinary littleness. It would be hard to conceive of any creature greater than man at his highest, or more despicable than man at his lowest. Those who say that man is the fellow of the angels are right; those also are right who declare him lower than the beasts. He can be either, and in some cases, such as that of debased genius, both. He can merit the sublime eloquence of Hamlet's soliloquy, or the scorn of Swift's ferocious satire. Here lies the difficulty of definition, for no definition of life is worth anything that is not of general application. A working definition of life must cover all cases; it must apply equally to Shakespeare and Dick Turpin. Life appears to mean something so totally different to a great poet and a highwayman, that it seems impossible to find a common denominator. Yet it may be found; and I suggest that the working definition of life may be reduced to this formula: *Life is the pursuit of*

happiness through self-development, in accordance with evolutionary law.

The Puritan moralist will at once take exception to the word happiness. It is the tragedy of Puritanism that it never understood that word. In its stern and entirely noble revolt from license it lost the truth of the available happiness of human life. It took its pleasures sadly because it took them grudgingly. Yet nothing is more self-evident than that man is created with a healthy appetite for joy. Watch any normal child, and the plainest thing about him will be his appetite for joy. He will dance and run for mere delight of motion, bathe his hands in sunbeams, find material for drama in the commonest events, anticipate the simplest pleasures with passionate expectation, never have enough of pleasure, never suppose that he exists for any other purpose than to be happy. The boy is not less willing to be pleased, the man not less athirst for pleasure. To condemn these appetites is to mutilate human nature. So entirely wholesome are they that it may be boldly said that the man who has lost them has forfeited his right to live.

He is a man disfranchised. He is an outcast from the common lot. For what are all the arts and literatures but ministers of happiness; what is the establishment of a home, which is the commonest purpose of existence, but a concrete form of happiness; what is the aim of all our politics, our social movements and reforms, our adaptations of science to our modes of life, but to secure a more general control of the elements of social happiness? If there be one single thing of which man is thoroughly convinced it is his capacity for happiness and his right to it; nor, in the long run, will he submit to any code of morals that denies that right.

Those of us who have been brought up in the cold shadow of Puritanism will have some difficulty in admitting that the chief business of life is happiness; but this is merely the result of a wrong education. If, instead of repeating the tenets of an inherited creed, we examine our own nature with intelligent scrutiny, we shall not fail to discover the truth. Even in our denials of happiness we shall find that we have been seeking happiness all the time without knowing it. Some

men have been known to take as much pleasure in hair-shirts as others in robes of silk; it was their form of pleasure. Simon Stylites on his pillar was not unhappy; he was simply the sort of man who found more pleasure in the gratification of his pride than in the gratification of his flesh. Self-denial itself is a form of happiness. Men who renounce the pleasures of the world do so because they are enamored of another kind of pleasure which the world cannot give them. Austerity has its delights as well as profligacy. We may pursue these reflections in a great number of directions, but always at the end we shall be confronted with the fact that the real business on which all mankind is engaged is the pursuit of happiness. It is nothing to the point that the method of the pursuit often appears, and indeed is, wrong; the thing to be observed is that, wrong or right, man has been upon this business since the beginning of time, and will go on with it to the end. It is the prime reason of his existence.

If we grant so much, we may then turn to our definition of the meaning of life with some con-

fidence and observe its chief condition; which is that the pursuit of happiness can only be successful when it involves self-development. Here we at once enter the realm of discrimination, of moral values. The profligate seeks happiness through self-debasement, and therein stands condemned. The high-minded man seeks happiness through the restraint of lower passions and the development of a finer self, and therein stands approved. The appetite is the same; it is the direction that differs. The end of life is symmetry, the rounding out of all graceful potencies into harmony. The only real happiness lies in the attainment of symmetry. So long as we consciously approach symmetry, it does not much matter what our environment may be in a social or material sense. Poverty and wealth, fame and obscurity are alike idle terms. Marcus Aurelius in his palace and Thoreau in his hut were alike seekers after symmetry. The palace was of as little value to the one as the hut to the other. And each was truly happy because each was finding happiness in self-development. There is no other kind of happiness that

THE MEANING OF LIFE

is authentic. We live not only to fulfill ourselves, but to surpass ourselves. And the constitution of the world is so ordered that we can never find genuine happiness in any form of life that does not serve these supreme ends.

Seeking happiness through self-development we come into line with the great evolutionary process which rules the universe. We are borne onward by its cosmic tide. We see our Paradise not behind us but before us. Our little bit of day's work, like our little life, becomes a thing of immense significance, because it is a part in a vast whole. We are like the workers on some small detail of a great cathedral; the thing we do is small, but we know that it is part of a great design. Sometimes, too, at rare intervals, we climb a turret from which we get a momentary vision of the whole. Of all discoveries made by human genius there is none that has brought so much hope to mankind as evolution. It has bidden man look upward and onward through uncalculated ranges of existence. It has made immortality intelligible. It has clothed the meanest human life with new dignity. It has

T H E B O O K O F C O U R A G E

written the true apocalypse of the race. Instead of lessening the value of man, as was at first supposed, it has added to it infinitely. Instead of an arbitrary, piecemeal, and final creation, it has shown us creation still at work, and indefinitely at work. Instead of a universe jarred by some great catastrophe and disordered, it has shown us a universe that is symmetrical, harmonious, and divinely ordered. It is the cosmic gospel of our age, whose base is reason, whose proof is experience, whose fruit is a resolute and wide-visioned optimism.

When a man comes into line with the evolutionary process of the universe his distractions are at an end. He attains equipoise. The trouble with a vast number of human lives is that they are deficient in equipoise. They are distracted by conflicting aims. Pleasure, pride, duty, in turn solicit them, and each has its period of attraction. Such lives are like ships that sail upon a circle, always returning to the same port. What wonder that the wind that fills their sails often wails dismally the unhappy wise man's falsehood that life is vanity? But the man who

is consciously in line with the evolutionary purpose of the universe has no such misgiving. He is at least moving forward, though he knows not to what final goal. He is filled with the exhilaration of a real progress. He finds the boundaries of his life constantly enlarged, and in this is his happiness. The universe works with him toward the completion of himself; and he works with the universe. For evolution is not a passive but an active process. We are not only pushed on, but we push; we are not only acted on, but we act. Evolution, in encouraging the hope of boundless self-development, provokes the effort of self-development. We are content with no lesser aim than to become all we can be. We have a programme of existence, definite, august, sublime; and the aim of life is to fulfil that programme.

One of the chief gains of the evolutionary view of life is that it totally ignores death. It makes immortality, as I have already said, intelligible. Immortality, as dependent on an arbitrary act of faith, can never be intelligible to a thoughtful mind. It presents not only diffi-

culties but injustices. We are bound to ask whether the men who are supposed to fail in faith, and therefore in immortality, because the means of faith are unknown to them, are justly treated? Moreover, faith is, after all, a matter of temperament. The poetic temperament finds faith easy; the logical temperament finds it impossible. "Even in the face of death we must assert that two and two make four," said Tolstoi; and this is the ultimatum of the logical temperament. Faith, when it implies the acceptance of a form of thought, is often an attempt to make two and two make five. Evolution emancipates us from these contradictions. It bases immortality on admitted facts. It shows us the authentic progress of man from less to more, and makes the promise of further progress rational. It offers an equal chance to all men, since all men are capable of some form of self-development. A creature which has reached its present point of progress by myriads of years of effort, is not likely to stop at its present achievement. Man is seen not as made, but as being made. With this vision before us, death, in the

sense of annihilation, becomes an absurdity. As a mere matter of probability, it is much more rational to suppose that death helps forward the evolutionary process than that it finally arrests it. Browning's pregnant saying, "Never say of me that I am dead," is the assertion not of poetic intuition only but of supreme rationality.

In what way the evolutionary process will deal with our human personalities when they have passed beyond the range of time, we do not know. We do know, however, that the life of our personality is a totally different thing from the life of our body. The personality of Shakespeare, for example, is much more vital to-day, and bulks much larger in the general human consciousness, than when he was the manager of the Globe Theatre in London. This may be called an extreme case, but the same thing is substantially true of any one who has occupied a dear and honored place in the affections of others. Those who have gone away are so little gone that their image is never absent from our minds, their words abide in our hearts, and at times the sense of their actual presence is as clear as any

other fact which we know through the senses. It is many years since my parents died, but never for a single moment have I been able to think of them as other than living. Is there not something more than instinct or intuition in this way of thinking? Is it not the recognition of personality as indestructible, and is not this recognition based on the calmest reason?

We sometimes forget that the best, and certainly the most important elements, in all earthly life are intangible. Our thinking, willing, loving are sublime secrecies. No one has seen thought, will, or love. Yet no one doubts that they exist. These are the characteristics of our personality, and personality is intangible. It manifests itself through physical organs, but it is separable from them. Is it not then reasonable to suppose that that which was really separable from the body while it used bodily organs for its expression, will go on living when it is wholly separated from the body? A personality like Shakespeare's, which is more potent in its influence on mankind after three centuries than it was when allied to the flesh, may be rationally

THE MEANING OF LIFE

conceived as still alive, though under what conditions we do not know. A life lived in self-development, in accord with evolutionary law, must continue its development; for evolution affirms the infinite continuity of life, and the constant upward movement of all life to freer and completer modes of expression.

The meaning of life, reduced to practical forms, is then very simple; it is to make the best of all means of self-development within our reach, in the belief that in so doing we are working out our own immortality. We have already progressed from childhood to manhood, from total ignorance to some measure of knowledge, from rawness to a relative ripeness; let us continue the experiment as far as this life takes us, and have faith in the strict economy of the universe, which allows nothing capable of further life to perish. If we are worthy of extended life we shall find extended life; but our worthiness or unworthiness clearly depends upon our use of present opportunity.

When Emerson stood at the grave of Longfellow, himself already marked for death, he

